

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Walnut Park Farm Historic District

other names/site number McDonald, R.L. Farm; Country Club Farm; Creek Farm; Schreiber Farm

2. Location

street & number Junction of Highways 59 and 71/Business I-29 [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Joseph [X] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Andrew code 003 zip code 64505

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date

18 Nov. 99

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

- [] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
[] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
[] determined not eligible for the
National Register.
[] removed from the
National Register
[] other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
[X] private	[] building(s)	4	2	buildings
[] public-local	[X] district			
[] public-State	[] site	1	0	sites
[] public-Federal	[] structure	1	0	structures
	[] object	0	0	objects
		5	2	Total

N/A

Historic Function	Current Functions
DOMESTIC/single dwelling	DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/animal facility	DOMESTIC/secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding	AGRICULTURE/animal facility
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field	AGRICULTURE/agricultural field
AGRICULTURE/storage	AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding
	AGRICULTURE/storage

Architectural Classification	Materials
No style	foundation Limestone
Other: gabled ell	walls WOOD
	BRICK
	roof ASPHALT
	other Iron

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

AGRICULTURE

Periods of Significance

1870-1914

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: River Bluffs Regional Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 87

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
 15 344700 4410910

B. Zone Easting Northing
 15 345110 4410900

C. Zone Easting Northing
 15 345070 4410090

D. Zone Easting Northing
 15 344700 4410090

[X] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See continuation sheet

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Allen Schreiber

street & number 3720 Rochester Rd. telephone (816) 279-3150

city or town St. Joseph state Missouri zip code 64505

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Walnut Park Farm Historic District
Andrew County, MO

SUMMARY: The Walnut Park Farm Historic District is an 87-acre agricultural oasis on a rise between two heavily traveled highways within an area of rapid urbanization in southern Andrew County, just north of St. Joseph, Missouri. Once the heart of a renowned livestock breeding operation that encompassed more than 500 acres in the 1890s, the nucleus today retains four historic buildings plus a site within an agricultural setting that still reflects its appearance during the 1870-1914 period of significance. The contributing resources are a circa 1880 brick, 1½-story gabled ell residence, a circa 1870 L-form basement barn once used to shelter Shorthorn cattle and Leicestershire sheep, a circa 1890 stable where Standardbred horses were housed and fed, a circa 1900 root cellar, and the site of a circa 1880 enclosed track and show ring where the farm's purebred horses were trained and shown to prospective buyers. The properties are located on gently rolling land near the western edge of the district. As the extant remains of a stock farm noted for the breeding of trotting horses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the properties retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Contributing to the farm atmosphere, cattle still graze the loess fields which are currently covered with alfalfa and brome grass. Two district buildings--a circa 1925 garage near the entrance and a circa 1950 pole barn which is out of view over a rise--are noncontributing because they were built after the period of significance. Uncounted ancillary properties include a privy and wells.

ELABORATION: Walnut Park Farm Historic District is approximately 1/2 mile north of Buchanan County within a rapidly developing area between St. Joseph and Savannah, the county seats of Buchanan and Andrew Counties. The district is entered from U.S. 71/59-Business Route I-29, with the right-of-way constituting the west boundary. The town of Country Club Village is on the west side of U.S. 71/59. Interstate 29 is a quarter of a mile east of, and parallel to, the east boundary. The location is near the eastern edge of bluffs formed during the last glacial period, delineating the meander of the Missouri River. Because of its loamy texture and other qualities, the farm's rich loess soil is well-suited for the forage crops necessary for stock raising, as well as for general agriculture. Some terracing is evident but it is not considered to be from the period of significance.

All of the contributing and noncontributing properties are in reasonably close proximity, for agricultural properties. Upon entering the district from U.S. 71/59-Business Route I-29, the contributing residence, root cellar and basement barn and the noncontributing garage are within a fairly compact grouping. A privy which because of its small size is not counted is also within this group, south of the basement barn. The former stable is farther away but is clearly visible from the main ensemble. The site of the track and show ring, on a flat area south of the former stable, is somewhat more distant but is still clearly associated with the other properties. The most distant property is the noncontributing pole barn which is nearly out of sight over a rise. (See Site Map, Figure 1)

The standing properties and the show ring site are described as follows:

(A) Gabled-Ell House. Constructed in circa 1880, the 1½-story red brick residence rests on a foundation of coursed rockfaced limestone, with a partial basement. The intersecting wings are of approximately equal size and ridgelines of both roofs are of the same height. Bricks are laid in a common bond. Unfortunately, the house has been sandblasted although its form is intact and, according to McAlester and McAlester, somewhat uncommon when rendered in brick. Frame gabled-ell

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(aka gable-front-and-wing) houses were widespread in the Midwest.¹ A gabled 1½-story addition, originally a summer kitchen, is nominally attached to the northeast corner where it somewhat awkwardly shares one of the house's two porches. This addition is not quite as tall as the rest of the house but has similar brickwork and appears to have been constructed at about the same time. Two open porches with hipped roofs and concrete floors are within the wing angles. Two interior chimneys pierce the main asphalt-shingled roof and a third chimney emerges from the addition.²

Exclusive of the summer kitchen, the house measures approximately 25' by 33'. Dimensions of the summer kitchen are approximately 15' by 18½'.

The south elevation with the original main entrance is three bay, apart from the addition which is attached to the northeast corner. Porch supports at this location are tapering round wood columns and pilasters. The concrete floor on this porch is fairly old. Window openings in this elevation and throughout the basic house have segmental brick arches consisting of bricks set lengthwise, and wood sills. While a few wedge shaped bricks are used in arch construction, most are rectangular. Primary entrances have two-pane transoms. First floor fenestration in the main elevation consists of a window and entrance in the side wing and a window in the gabled end. First floor windows and gable end windows on both levels have four-over-four sash. Two short attic windows are aligned above the first floor window and entrance. The south elevation of the addition has an entrance and a window opening.

The east elevation of the basic building has a transomed entrance flanked by segmental window openings with four-over-four sash on the first floor. Arches consist of bricks set lengthwise. A side porch with a relatively recent concrete slab floor extends along the kitchen addition where its roof meshes with the kitchen roof. Slender, square steel supports are nonoriginal. Original supports were probably tapering wood columns similar to those found on the south porch. Short attic windows with segmental arches consisting of bricks set lengthwise are above the entrance and the south window. The east elevation of the addition is windowless except for a plywood-covered opening in the gable. The head of this former loft window is flat, consisting of bricks set on their edges.

On the north elevation, the east third consists of the north facade of the addition which contains a central entrance with a segmental arch consisting of bricks set on their edges. The middle third consists of the gabled end of one of the intersecting wings. The west third--the side of the other intersecting wing--is indented approximately one foot. The gabled portion has a centered four-over-four window within a segmental opening, with bricks set lengthwise, at each level. On the first floor of the west third is a

¹Gabled ell houses, a folk type, are included in the gable-front-and-wing category as defined by Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), pp. 92-93. The Missouri Historic Preservation Program's description of the gabled ell house is generally similar to McAlester's gable-front-and-wing, with one important exception. McAlester's description includes, and Missouri's description excludes, ridgelines of different heights for this house type.

²Annette Davis Dabney, who was born on the farm (she was nine months old at the time of the 1900 census) and spent many summers there, provided dates for the various buildings and other information about the floor plans and various uses.

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Andrew County, MO

centered four-over-four window within a segmental opening consisting of two courses of bricks set on their edges. The short attic window directly above is set within a segmental/lengthwise opening.

The west elevation includes the west side of the addition, which contains central window openings with segmental arches consisting of single courses of bricks set on their edges. Both openings are covered with plywood. The end of the west gabled wing has a centered four-over-four window within a vousssoired opening at each level. The remainder of the west elevation consists of the porch described in connection with the south elevation and the side of the intersecting wing. The wing portion has a transomed entrance and a short attic window, both with segmental arches consisting of bricks set lengthwise.

For the most part, the original layout of three rooms down and three up appears to be intact, although at some point the kitchen was moved from the addition into the northeast main floor room which had been a bedroom. Other main floor rooms are a living room in the northwest and a dining room in the southeast. An enclosed stairway to the second floor and access to the basement is along the west wall of the kitchen. Upstairs, bedrooms are above the living and dining rooms and a bathroom has been added in a former bedroom above the kitchen. Originally, the basement was entered from the east porch. Most interior woodwork consists of plain varnished boards without moldings. However, an inside doorway has an unusual round-arched transom window. Doors are paneled and retain their old rimlocks. The former kitchen addition--currently a single room used for storage--does not communicate with the rest of the house. Stairs to the loft have been removed.

While integrity has been diminished, primarily by the use of inappropriate porch supports and possibly other structural changes to the porch on the east facade, the other three elevations strongly reflect their original appearance. The presence of very old if not original porch columns on the main porch helps mitigate the loss of integrity associated with changes to the secondary porch. Despite some typical changes and updates, the interior is relatively original. Consequently the house--the only surviving residential property in the district--is a contributing building.

(B) L-Form Basement Barn. Constructed beginning in circa 1870, the L-form basement barn is the most imposing building on the farmstead. Resting on a coursed ashlar limestone foundation, the barn is the first contributing building encountered upon entering the district from U.S. 59/71. Exterior sheathing of the upper floors is board and batten. Overall dimensions (the angle formed by the wings is filled with a shed roof addition) are 61' x 90½'. Dimensions of the taller east-west portion are 40½' x 61'. Dimensions of the north-south portion are 30½' x 50'. The east-west wing rests entirely on a stone foundation, while the east side of the north-south wing is unwallled but supported by large hewn posts.

On the main (west) facade where the lowest level is almost completely below grade, entrance to the first floor is via two wide sliding doors reached by shallow ramps. One of these entrances is centered in the nearly symmetrical west gable end of the east-west wing. The other entrance is near the south end of the north-south wing. Fenestration includes windows of various sizes and a louvered opening at the gable peak. An unusual double-leaf hay door is in the gable end directly above the central entrance. Most of the window openings in this elevation have modest pediment shaped heads. The door has been removed from a single-leaf entrance in the north-south wing which is currently covered with a corrugated panel.

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In the north elevation, three nearly square window openings with modest pediment heads are symmetrically arranged at the first floor level. The basement level contains five unevenly spaced rectangular openings in three different sizes, but all relatively small. In the south elevation, two 6/6 windows are symmetrically arranged at the first floor level and two louvered windows are directly above in the loft. The upper part of the basement wall also has louvered openings. In the east elevation, the first floor level of the east-west wing contains three nearly square windows, each with six lights, arranged symmetrically in the facade. A louvered window is near the gable apex. The stone foundation contains a large entrance flanked by two small square openings. Also in the east elevation, the wall of the north-south wing is unwindowed above the shed roof addition. A square window opening with six lights is in the wall below the shed roof. Doors leading into the basement of the east-west wing are no longer in place, although the timbers show where the hinges and latches were located. Several windows in the stone foundation are missing from their openings.

At the basement or ground level, supports consist of rough hewn timbers nearly a foot in diameter. The two upper floors are pin-framed native walnut. In the loft, tie beams are connected to inclined purlin posts with fanlike braces. Frame timbers salvaged from one of the railroad lines that once passed through the McDonald property appear to have been incorporated into the barn's support system as it evolved.

Today the ground floor which once sheltered cattle and sheep is used only for hay storage. The upper floors which housed the family wagons and trotting horse sulkies as well as tons of loose hay are only lightly used for storage. The shed roof was added decades ago to provide a storage area for large hay bales. The barn is a contributing building.

(C) Trotting Horse Stable. The circa 1890 trotting horse stable is a rectangular building with a truncated hipped roof covered with corrugated metal. The wide central entrance in the primary south facade is topped with a gable containing a small loft window opening, now covered. The 36½' x 80' building has board-and-batten siding.

A double-leaf entrance is centered in the south elevation and a sliding door is centered in the north. A single-leaf entrance west of the wide south entrance probably opened onto a tack room. Dutch doors at the outer edges of the gable ends indicate where horses would have been let out to pasture.

Decades ago, the historic interior was converted for swine raising but seven windows along the side elevations suggest where horse stalls were located, along a central aisle. Framing with heavy cross-bracing, a tongue and groove ceiling and grain portholes suggest that grain for the horses was stored in the space below the roof. When the original interior was removed, the surface was cemented over for swine raising. The original floor was probably sawdust over dirt. Despite the interior conversion, this is a contributing building because the exterior today is essentially the same as during its period of significance.

(D) Track/Show Ring Site. The site of the circa 1880 enclosed track and show ring at Walnut Park Farm is a flat, grass-covered area south of the extant house and stable. While the track outline is said to be faintly visible in winter and early spring, the covering of brome grass and alfalfa hay the rest of the year make its form unreadable. No description of the track has been found. Presumably it was oval with

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a low wooden railing around the inside and the perimeter, painted white. While a half-mile track would have been very suitable, the actual length of McDonald's track is unknown. Although the original structure is gone, the unblemished site "reads" as part of the larger agricultural context and is counted as contributing.

(E) Root Cellar. The circa 1900 root cellar is north of the residence. It consists of a 7' x 11' entrance house with concrete steps leading to an excavated cellar containing two rooms, one behind the other. The distance between the outside door of the gable-roofed entrance house and the rear of the earthen mound is approximately 28'. The building is sided with weatherboard and has a square window opening in each side wall. The cellar interior is plastered concrete. Air vents serving the two rooms protrude from the mound. Contributing.

(F) Pole Barn. (Noncontributing.) The circa 1950 pole barn is a gable-roofed building with a prolonged side slope. Measuring 52' x 52', this building rests on the east side of a rise where it is largely out of view from the main complex. Even if it were conspicuous, its effect on the district would be negligible because it is an older type of farm building with unpainted, weathered siding and a corrugated metal roof.

(G) Garage. (Noncontributing.) The circa 1925 automobile garage is a gable-roofed building framed by upright poles. Measuring 16½' x 20' and resting on a concrete foundation, this building is located near the entrance to the district. Like the barn and stable, it has board and batten siding. Since it was constructed after the period of significance, it is noncontributing.

A privy with a gable roof and board-and-batten siding is a few feet south of the basement barn. This tiny building, an ancillary structure perhaps constructed in the 1920s, is uncounted.

Construction dates were estimated for all properties. Township tax records which would have aided in dating the buildings have not been preserved.

Although some buildings once present are now gone (these include at least one frame residence, a mule barn, tenant houses, a blacksmith shop, a large hay shed and probably other properties), there is no mistaking that this is the center of a farmstead. Most of the tenant houses and other residential properties at Walnut Park Farm are thought to have been located within a rectangular area west and south of the basement barn. The blacksmith shop was probably near the stable. The mule barn, a circa 1890 transverse frame building with side sheds, was located a short distance northeast of the basement barn. This timber frame, board-and-batten sided building was only recently razed. A central aisle was flanked on the east and west by eight large box stalls (four on each side). The truss framing was bent to allow for an opening in the south end of the runway ceiling which accessed a small hay mow. Sliding doors were on the north and south gable ends. The east shed was a loafing parlor and the west shed probably was used for hay storage. Known sites are indicated on the Site Map.

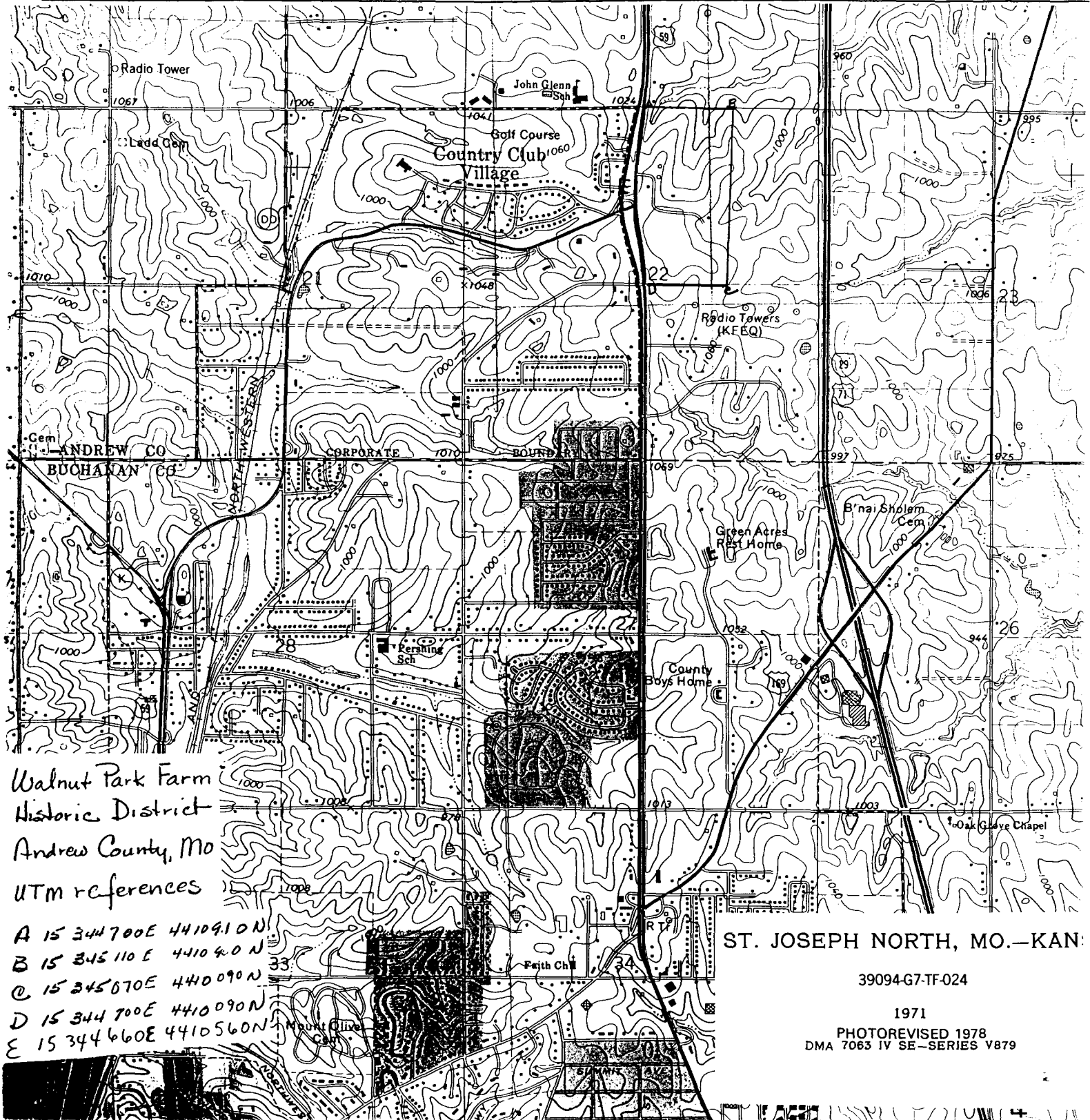
The condition of the district buildings ranges from very good to fair. The large barn, residence and root cellar are in very good condition. The horse stable is in fair to good condition and recently was given a new corrugated metal roof. East and south of the properties are the acres of rolling pasture on which the purebred cattle, trotting horses and sheep were pastured.

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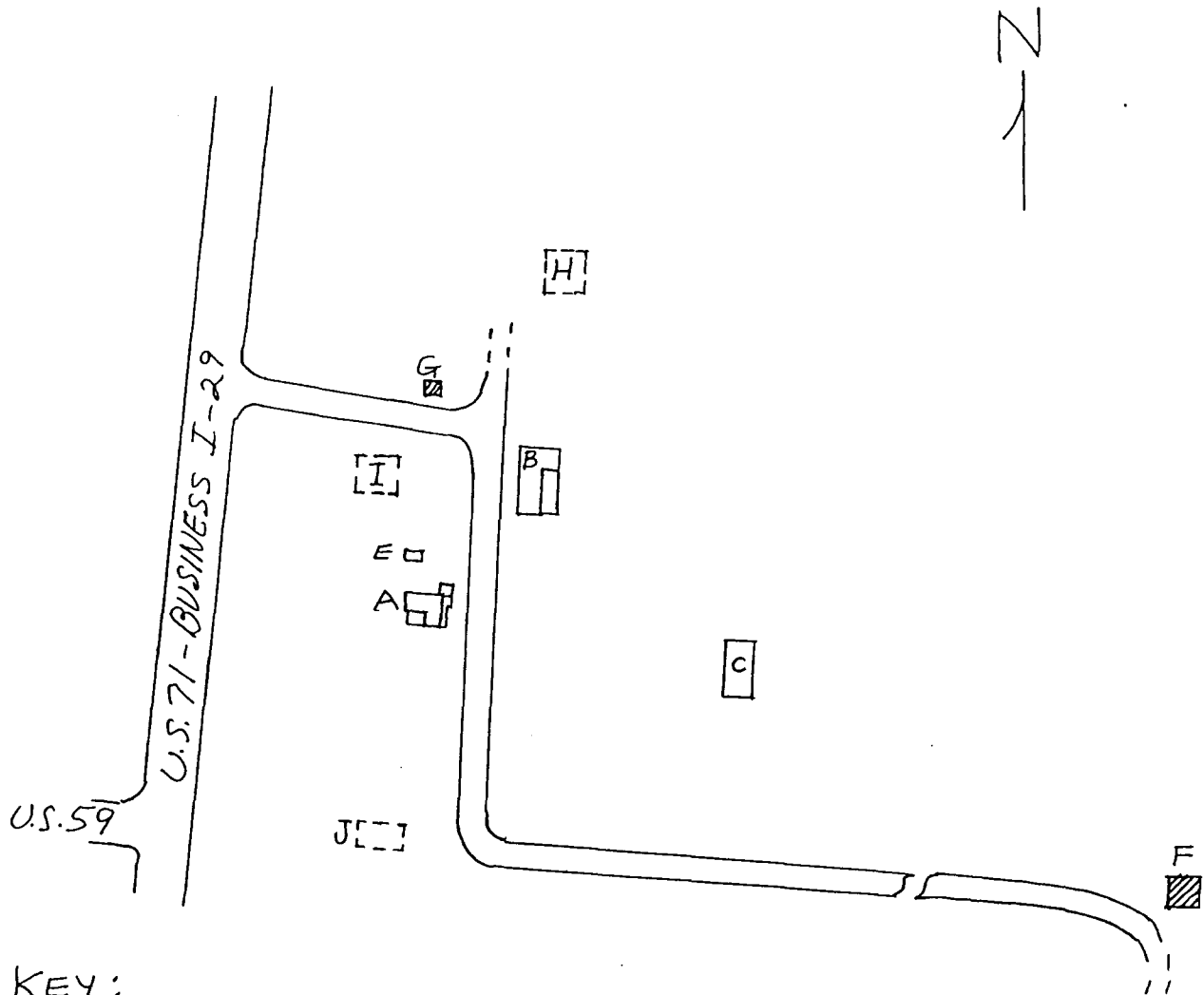
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Walnut Park Farm Historic District
Andrew County, MC

FARM NUCLEUS, WALNUT PARK FARM



KEY:

- A-GABLED ELL HOUSE
- B-BASEMENT BARN
- C-FORMER STABLE
- D-TRACK/SHOW RING(SITE)
- E-ROOT CELLAR
- F-POLE BARN
- G-GARAGE
- H-SITE OF MULE BARN
- I-SITE OF FRAME HOUSE
- J-SITE OF FRAME HOUSE

NONCONTRIBUTING = 

(NOT TO SCALE)

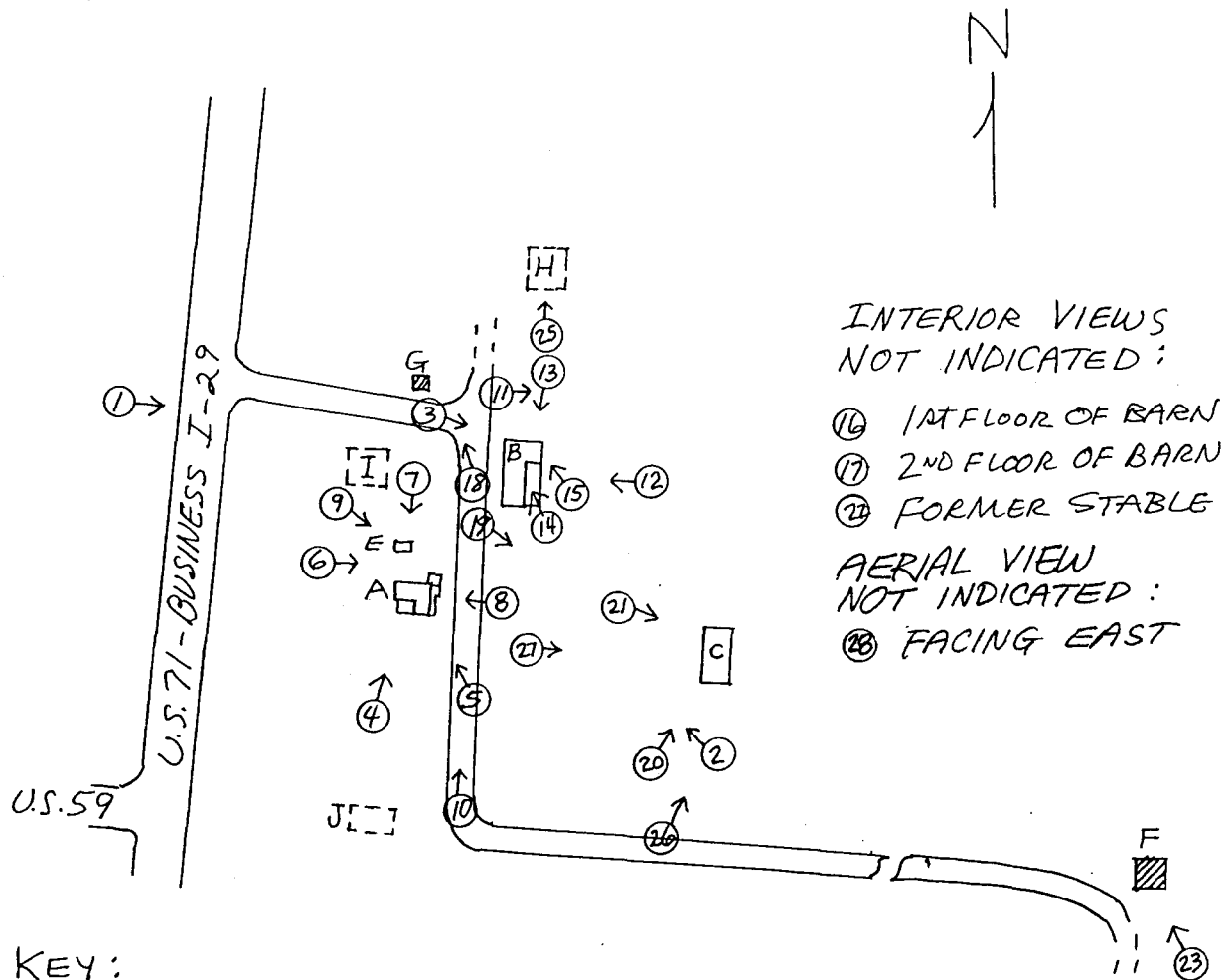
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**Walnut Park Farm Historic District
Andrew County, MO**

PHOTO VIEW ANGLES
WALNUT PARK FARM



INTERIOR VIEWS
NOT INDICATED:

- ①⑥ 1ST FLOOR OF BARN
- ①⑦ 2ND FLOOR OF BARN
- ②② FORMER STABLE

AERIAL VIEW
NOT INDICATED:
②⑧ FACING EAST

KEY:

- A-GABLED ELL HOUSE
- B-BASEMENT BARN
- C-FORMER STABLE
- D-TRACK/SHOW RING(SITE) (24) → D
- E-ROOT CELLAR
- F-POLE BARN
- G-GARAGE
- H-SITE OF MULE BARN
- I-SITE OF FRAME HOUSE
- J-SITE OF FRAME HOUSE

PHOTO ANGLE = ⑤ →
NONCONTRIBUTING =

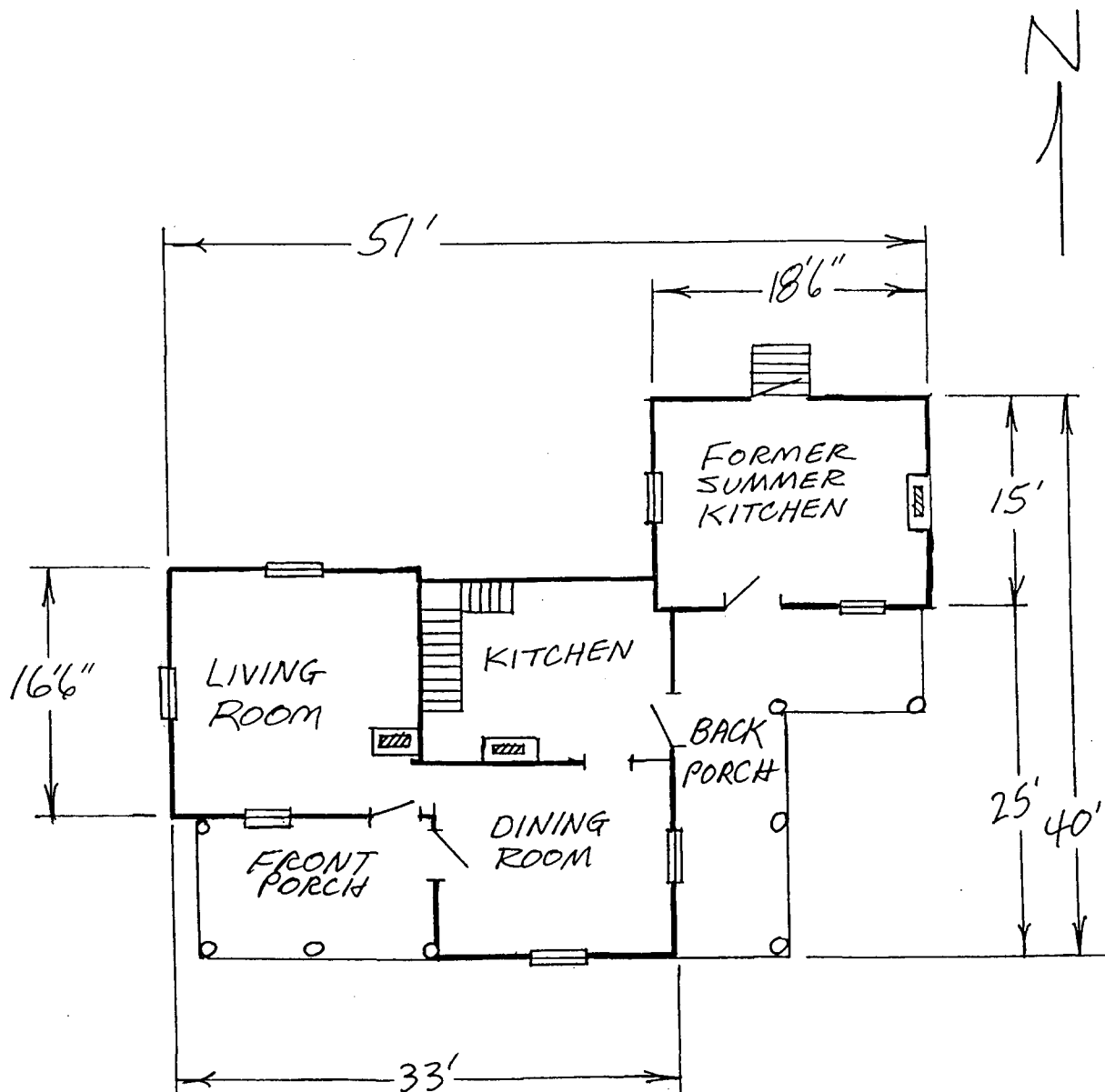
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GABLED-ELL HOUSE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

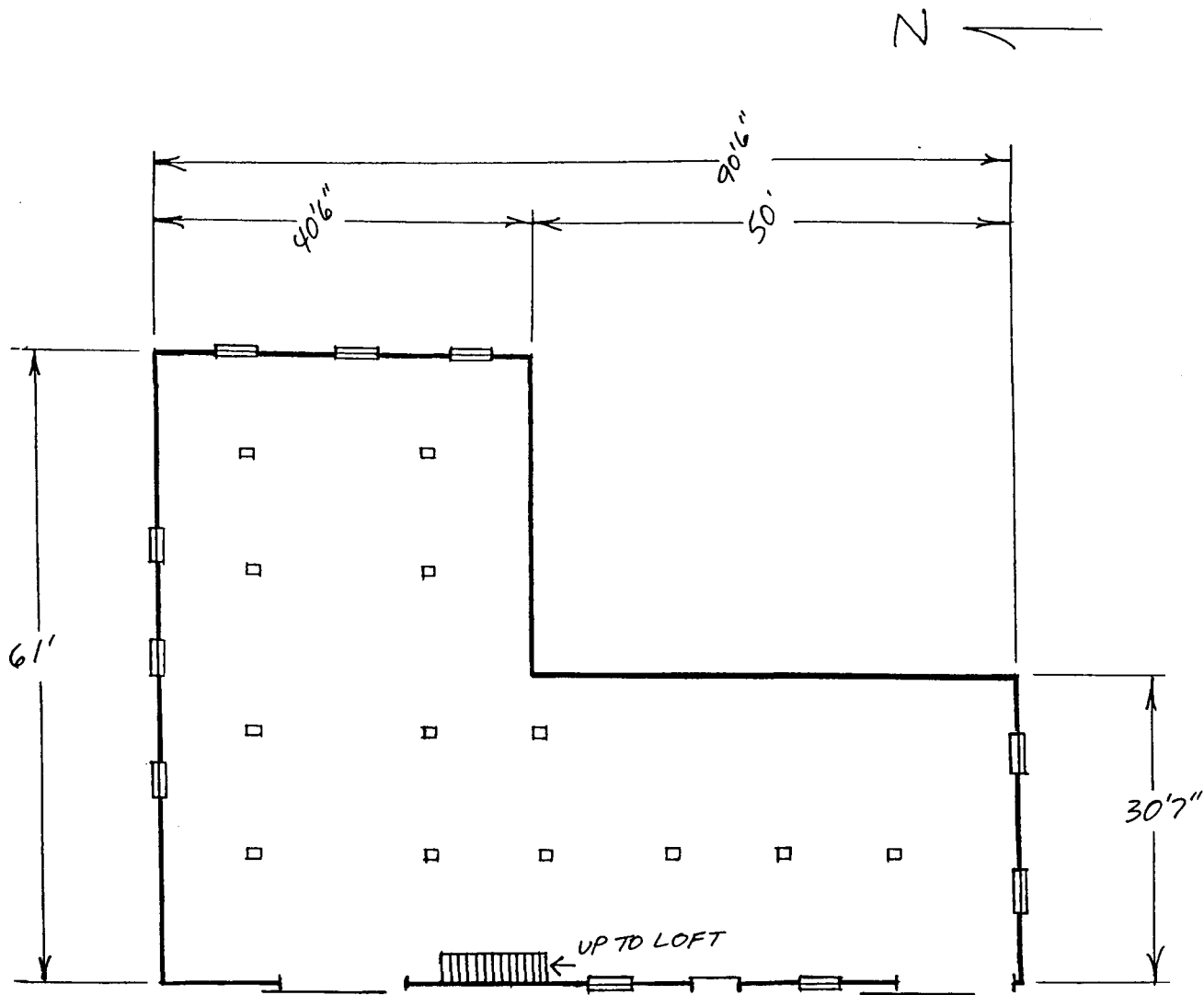
NOT TO SCALE

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BANK BARN, MAIN FLOOR

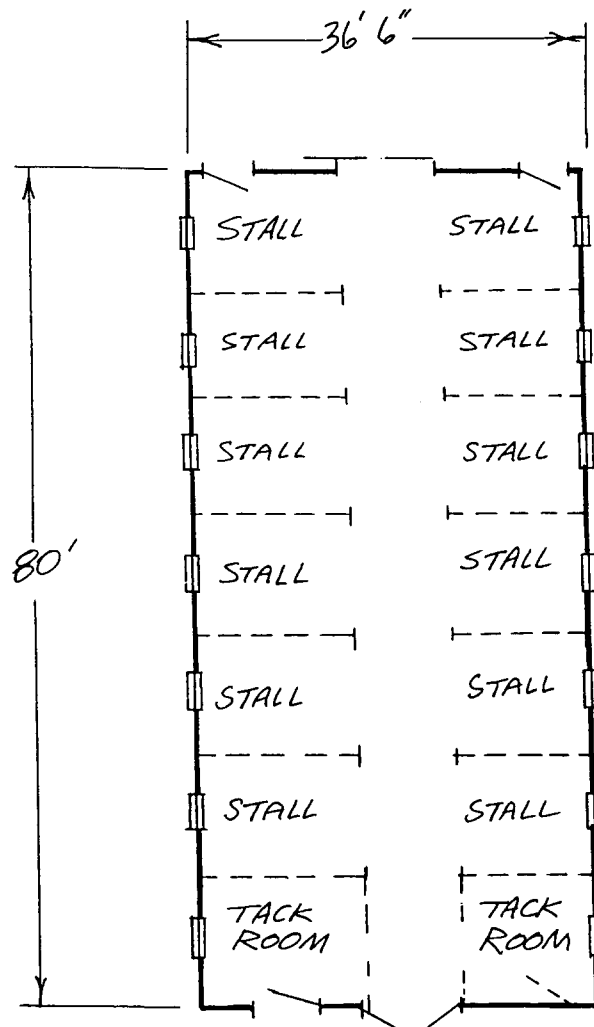
SCALE APPROX. $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'$

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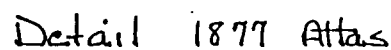
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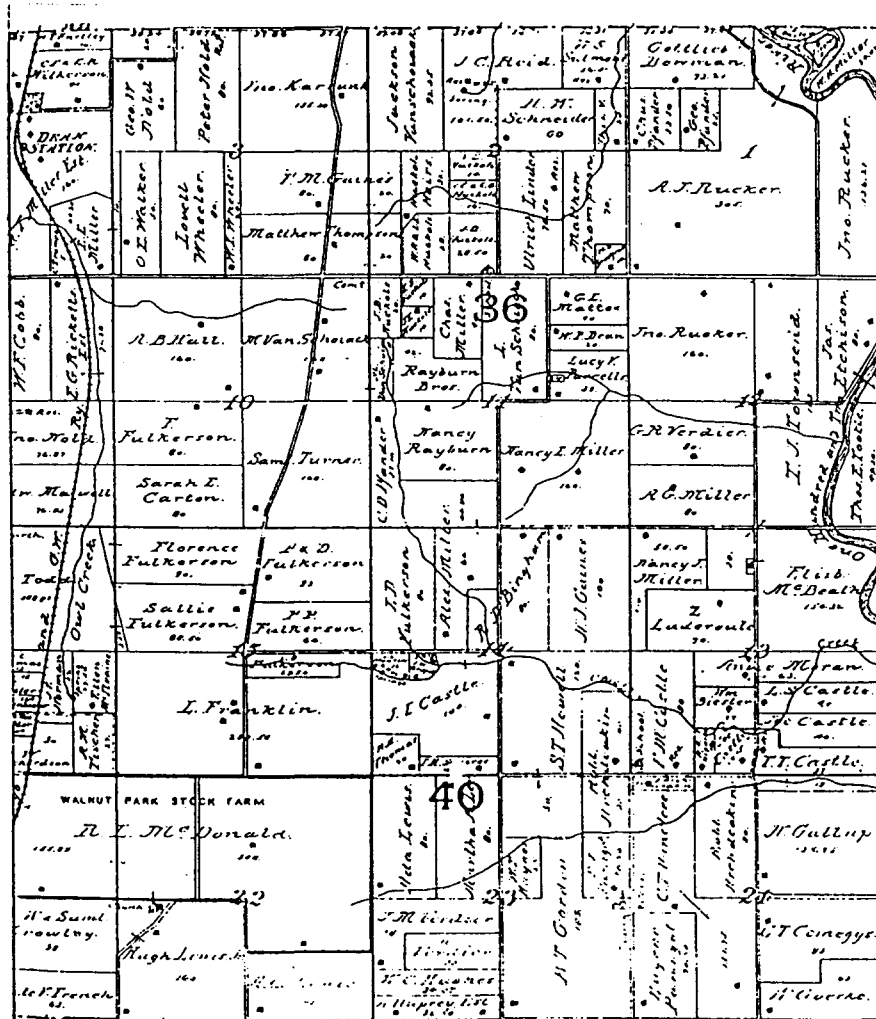
TROTting HORSE STABLE (ORIGINAL)
SCALE APPROX. $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'$

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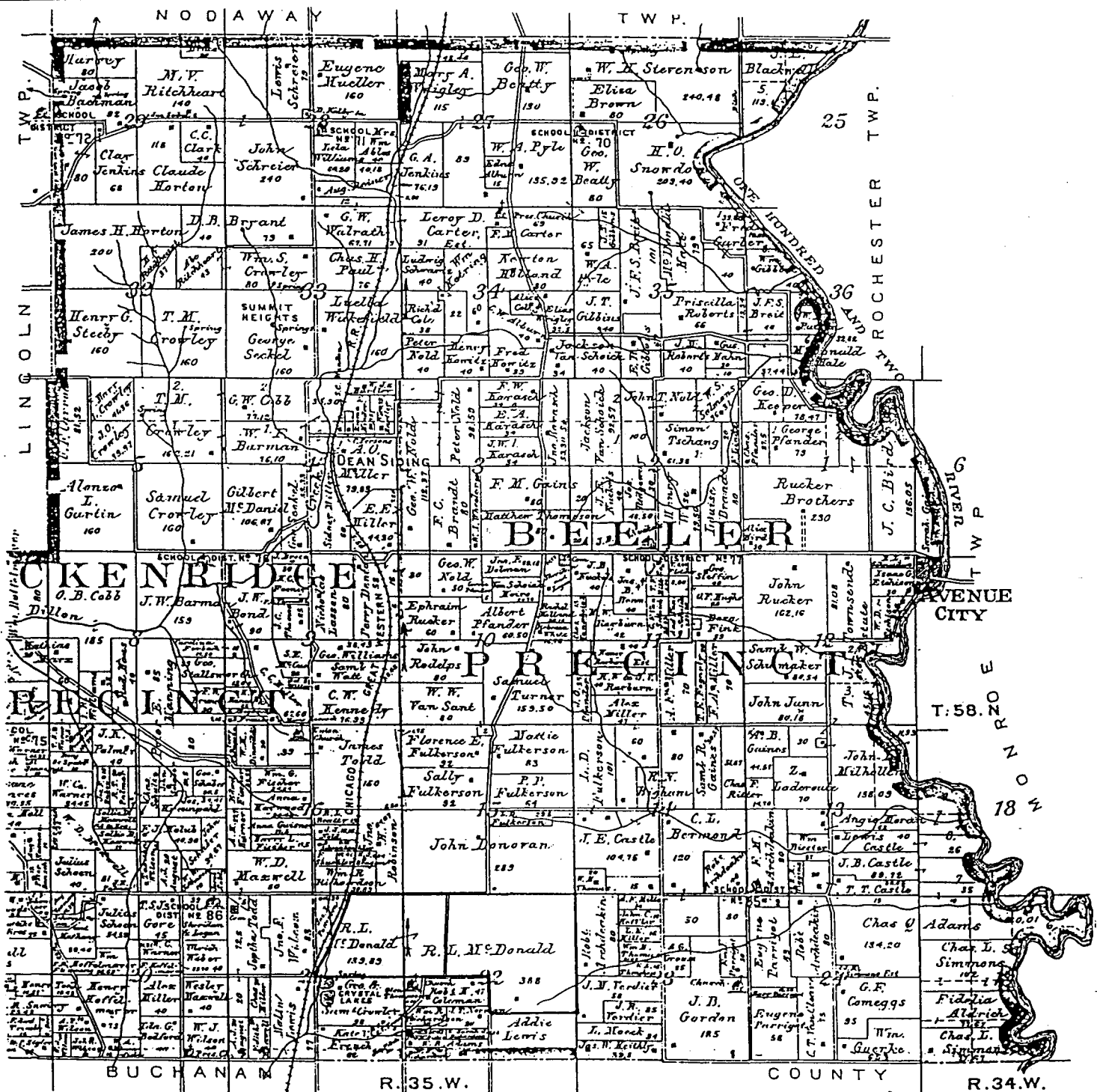
Detail 1896 Atlas

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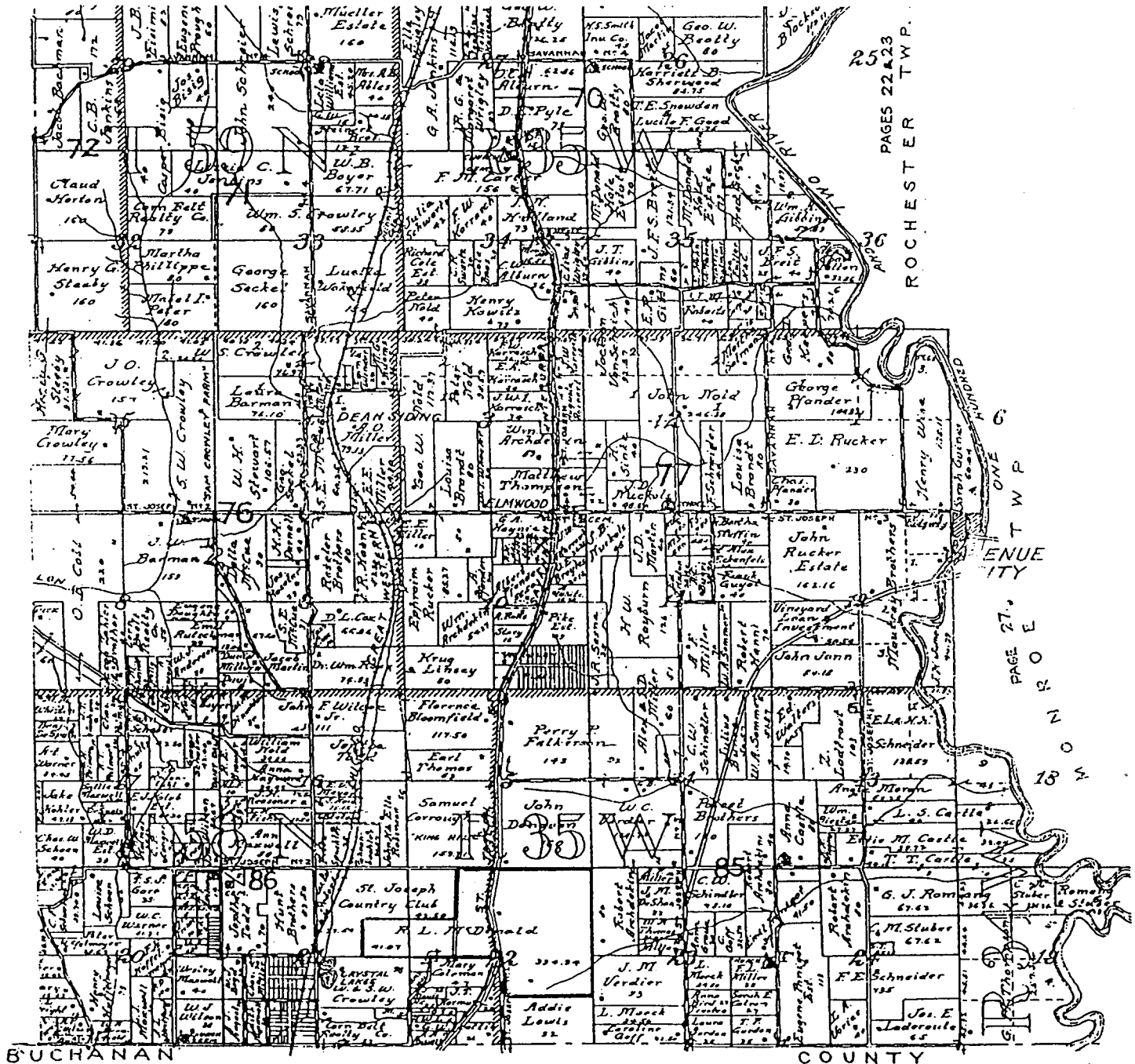
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Detail 1909 Atlas

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Detail 1926 Attas

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Walnut Park Farm Historic District
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SUMMARY: Walnut Park Farm Historic District, located at the junction of Highways 59 and 71/Business I-29 in southern Andrew County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the category of AGRICULTURE. Walnut Park Farm and similar purebred breeding farms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were important for their role in the development of the livestock industry in Missouri. For four decades beginning in the 1870s, under the ownership of Rufus Lee McDonald, Walnut Park Farm was noted for the breeding of Standardbred trotting horses and other livestock of unusually fine lineage. But while animal husbandry activities on the farm extended to Shorthorn cattle, Leicestershire sheep and swine, it was McDonald's breeding of trotters that gained the attention of Missouri harness racing aficionados. Shortly after the turn of the century, McDonald was among 20 Missouri breeders cited in a state publication for their skill in breeding Standardbred horses over a period of several years.³ Today the nucleus of Walnut Park Farm is an agricultural oasis bracketed by major highways within an area of rapid urbanization. The period of significance begins in 1870 when McDonald acquired the nominated portion of the farm. It ends in 1914 when the last Standardbred foal produced under McDonald's name was formally registered, indicating that the end of Walnut Park Farm as an experimental breeding facility was at hand or near. As a district, the four extant, contributing properties and a site are primarily linked by their proximity and complementary roles within an agricultural setting. The L-shaped basement barn and the former horse stable also have board-and-batten siding in common, painted white. While architecturally dissimilar, the brick farmhouse and root cellar were obviously central to farm and family life. Despite the lack of tangible remains, the grass-covered site of the training track and show ring remains evocative to anyone familiar with the history of Walnut Park Farm.

ELABORATION: Long before Missouri's rural population peaked at approximately two million in 1900 (when the state had the nation's highest percentage of farmers engaged in stockraising), Missouri had become a major producer of cattle, sheep, swine, horses and mules. During the 19th century, breeding stock were imported to take advantage of Missouri's favorable climate, abundant grazing lands and proximity to markets. Early imports included donkeys and mules beginning in the 1820s and thoroughbred Alderney, Jersey, Shorthorn and Aberdeen-Angus cattle in the 1830s. For various purposes, fine horses had been brought into Missouri even earlier from Kentucky, primarily, as well as from Virginia, New York and England.⁴ Many Kentucky farmers migrated to Missouri in the 19th century, bringing an advanced knowledge of stock breeding as well as their own blooded livestock.⁵ As agriculture developed rapidly after the Civil War, the main stockraising area extended along the Missouri River from St. Louis to Kansas City, and along the western border from near the southwest corner of the

³F. B. Mumford, acting dean and professor of animal husbandry at the University of Missouri College of Agriculture, cited McDonald and other breeders in The State of Missouri: An Autobiography. Edited by Walter Williams, The State of Missouri was compiled as part of the Missouri exhibit for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis (Columbia: E. W. Stephens Press, 1904), pp. 119-120.

⁴Writers' Program of the Works Progress Administration in the State of Missouri, Missouri: A Guide to the "Show-Me" State (New York: Hastings House Publishers, Inc., 1954), p. 65.

⁵George F. Lemmer, "Agitation for Agricultural Improvement in Central Missouri Newspapers Prior to the Civil War," Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XXXVII No. 4, July 1943, p. 384.

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state to St. Joseph. Missouri became internationally famous for its mules and, by the 1890s, for its saddle horses as well. Saddle horse breeding was concentrated in the east-central part of the state around Mexico. In the early 1900s the state's best-known mule and horse distribution center, the firm of Guyton and Harrington, was at Lathrop only 30 miles southeast of Walnut Park Farm.⁶ Apparently, most Missouri harness horse farms in the 19th century were of moderate size and were located near a racing center, much like Walnut Park Farm.

Horse racing had been popular in Missouri since frontier days when Indian ponies were matched against one another. In 1767, three years after the founding of St. Louis, horses raced on a quarter-mile track near the settlement.⁷ As new communities sprang up on the Missouri frontier, race tracks often were high priority items: "Race tracks were laid out in many communities by Kentucky and Virginia immigrants almost before churches and schools were built. The popularity of the sport encouraged the breeding industry."⁸ In an effort to improve the racing capabilities of American horses, the English Thoroughbred stallion, Messenger, was brought to Philadelphia to be bred in 1788. One of Messenger's sons, Rysdyk's Hambletonian, became a foundation of the Standardbred breed.⁹ The Standardbred breeding operation developed at Walnut Park Farm featured the offspring of historic lines including Hambletonian 10 and Mambrino Chief, both from the Messenger branch.¹⁰

By selective breeding from imported stock, Missouri horses gradually gained a reputation on the track as well as in the show ring. In 1890 a Missouri horse named Riley achieved heroic status by winning the Kentucky Derby, and by 1891 horse racing in various forms was on the bill at dozens of fairs throughout the state. After originating in the United States in about 1840, harness racing--which utilized trotters such as were bred at Walnut Park Farm--became more popular than ever during this period. "From the first week in July to the last week in August [in the early 1890s], hardly a day passed when there was not a trotting meet somewhere in the state."¹¹

Rufus Lee McDonald's interest in fast horses was almost a given, considering that he grew up in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, his birthplace. The first disciplined breeding of the Standardbred is said to have

⁶Duane Meyer, The Heritage of Missouri: A History (St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), pp. 460-461; Walter Williams, Ed., The State of Missouri: An Autobiography (Columbia, Missouri: E. W. Stephens Press, 1904), pp. 120-121.

⁷Jean Brand, Ed. by Floyd C. Shoemaker, "The Sport of Kings: An Early Missouri Diversion," Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XLV No. 4, July 1951, p. 383.

⁸Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Missouri, op cit.

⁹William H. P. Robertson, The History of Thoroughbred Racing in America (New York: Bonanza Books, 1964), p. 36-37.

¹⁰"Walnut Park Farm," St. Joseph Daily News, Jan. 1, 1892.

¹¹Pines, op cit., p.159; Brand, op cit., p. 384.

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taken place at Woodburn Farm in the Lexington-Harrodsburg bluegrass area within a few years of when McDonald came to St. Joseph in 1851, at the age of 19. What is thought to have been America's first stock farm catalog containing trotters was published in 1864 by Robert Aitcheson Alexander, who owned and operated Woodburn Farm.¹² Said McDonald's obituary (he lived to be 90): "Like most natives of Kentucky, Mr. McDonald was a lover of fine horses and his stock farm which adjoins the St. Joseph Country Club grounds [became] famous in the '80s for its fine trotting horses. On this farm were raised many horses that won fame on the track and in the show ring."¹³ Even if McDonald had somehow left Kentucky without developing an interest in horses, St. Joseph--where the Pony Express originated in 1860, after all--would have been a very good place to acquire one. Long a livestock center and point of departure for the Far West, St. Joseph also was an early bastion of harness racing in Missouri.¹⁴ Another track was located at Chillicothe, some 70 miles to the east. McDonald's horses raced at both of these tracks.

McDonald began developing Walnut Park Farm in 1869, beginning with the purchase of 160 acres adjacent to land then owned by his father-in-law, Robert Wilson. Wilson, a Virginian who moved to Andrew County in 1852, was an appointed U.S. senator from Missouri from 1862-63. When Wilson died in 1870, his 240 acres including what became the heart of Walnut Park Farm were inherited by his daughter, Mary Ann (Wilson) McDonald. In 1882, McDonald added 80 acres east of the former Wilson land and, at some point before 1896, acquired 68 additional acres.¹⁵ According to family tradition, McDonald named the farm Walnut Park because of the many black walnut trees growing on the land. The nominated acreage includes 80 acres originally owned by Wilson (the west half of the northeast quarter of Section 22, T58N, R35W), plus approximately seven acres of the northwest quarter of Section 22 lying east of the U.S. 59/71 right-of-way.¹⁶

In Old Saint Jo, regional historian Logan Sheridan described Walnut Park Farm as "one of the best-known livestock farms in Missouri....Mr. McDonald gave his personal attention to the farming operations and the breeding of the livestock.....There was a track for training the horses, and many won fame on the track and in the show ring. In addition to the horses, the farm raised Shorthorn cattle."¹⁷

¹²Between 1866-1901, 744 trotters were purchased at Woodburn for an average price of \$1,000. See Philip A. Pines, The Complete Book of Harness Racing (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1970), p. 113.

¹³"R. L. McDonald Dead at Age of 90 Years," St. Joseph News-Press, Jan. 6, 1923.

¹⁴Lily Ann Dickey, "The Pastimes of Missourians Before 1900," Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XXXVII No. 2, January 1943, p. 139.

¹⁵Andrew County Deed Records Book 5, p. 781; An Atlas of Andrew County (Philadelphia: Acme Publishing, 1897).

¹⁶Andrew County Deed Records Book 5, p. 781.

¹⁷Sheridan Logan, Old Saint Jo: Gateway to the West, 1799-1932 (St. Joseph: John Sublett Logan Foundation, 1979), p. 326.

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While "one of the best-known livestock farms in Missouri" may have been a slight exaggeration--perhaps the farm's fame was mainly confined to western Missouri and adjacent areas of Kansas--breeders like McDonald were important because, in the 19th century, most livestock improvement occurred on such farms. Like many breeders of his era, however, McDonald was a "gentleman farmer" rather than a practicing, hands-on agriculturalist.¹⁸ Typically, gentleman farmers like McDonald (who financed his genetic experiments with revenue from successful wholesale and manufacturing ventures in St. Joseph, where he resided) were the only farmers with the means to engage in breeding truly high quality livestock. Their experiments improved the characteristics of farm stock quickly in ways that may never have occurred under open range conditions. The development of Shorthorn cattle on farms like Walnut Park helped make America the world's leading meat producer. The development of Standardbred horses was important for transportation purposes prior to the advent of the automobile. But while some of McDonald's trotters mainly took people where they wanted to go, the very best and fastest competed at race tracks.

In 1904, McDonald's success as a breeder of Standardbred horses was deemed worthy of mention in a major state publication titled The State of Missouri: An Autobiography. The Autobiography listed 20 prominent Missouri breeders of Standardbred horses, headed by Colonel Ryland Todhunter of Greystone Park at Lexington in Lafayette County. In one year Todhunter's best stallion, Star Wilkes, is said to have produced colts valued at \$33,000. In addition to R. L. McDonald, other prominent Missouri breeders of the time included E. J. Shelpman, B. F. Swaggard, John Burruss, Henry T. McElroy, S. M. Finley, W. H. Stephenson, E. T. Letton & Son, H. D. Renter, G. E. Chinn, N. J. Coleman, J. R. Gentry, E. Knell, J. F. Robinson, J. D. Shewalter, H. D. Ayers, D. L. Bourn, G. M. Catron and D. A. Colyer. Only three Standardbred breeders--Todhunter, Shelpman and Swaggard--were discussed in any detail in the Autobiography. McDonald and the others on the short list, however, were described as "good" breeders of Standardbred horses. This was probably the equivalent of being listed in the Yellow Pages, with an endorsement; plus, unlike the Yellow Pages, the Autobiography remained a reference source around the state for years.¹⁹

The Standardbred trotter, McDonald's specialty, is a registered breed of horse intended to pull a small carriage (a "sulky") with a driver around a one-mile track in 2:30 minutes or less, maintaining a precise diagonal gait. McDonald preferred trotters over pacers, which run with a lateral gait and are in a separate racing category. The record time for trotters was down to 2:17 by 1871. The two minute barrier stood until 1903, when a chestnut mare named Lou Dillon lowered the time to 1:58 1/2. None of McDonald's trotters ever set a world record but they had great breed lines and one mare, Amy Lee, "electrified the West" with a time of 2:17 1/2.²⁰ As the popularity of harness racing increased in the

¹⁸Schapsmeier described the gentleman farmer as "one who owns a farm or lives on it but does not actively work in the fields...wealthy landowners, plantation owners or amateur farmers who profit from but do not engage in the manual labor involved in commercial farming." In McDonald's case, agricultural profit probably was secondary since he was a highly successful St. Joseph merchant and manufacturer.

¹⁹Williams, op cit., pp. 119-120.

²⁰"Walnut Park Farm," St. Joseph Daily News, January 1, 1892.

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1870s and 1880s, the ownership of horses bred for stamina and performance had significance far beyond the race track. When the principle means of transportation in America was still the horse and carriage, owning a Standardbred trotter must have been akin to owning, for example, a Shelby Cobra or other fine sports car.

Speed, strength, stamina, disposition and "trotting instinct" were among the basic qualities sought in the breeding and training program for trotters at Walnut Park Farm. An enclosed track of undetermined size but almost certainly less than a mile in length was constructed and records were kept of the horses' times at the rack and trot.²¹ When sold, the trained trotters were priced according to gait times, lineage, temperament, conformation and other attributes. Promising but relatively untrained young fillies and colts were also sold. Published advertisements like the one in the St. Joseph Daily News on New Year's Day 1892 touted the qualities of the farm's breeding stock. Making stallions available for breeding purposes was a major part of the operation.

The 1900 population census indicated 19 persons living at Walnut Park Farm and confirmed that the farm was then strongly oriented toward horse breeding. In addition to Marvin Middleton Davis, his wife Annette (one of McDonald's daughters) and their two children, there were two horse trainers, a trainer's wife and daughter, five horse grooms, a boarder farmer, three farm laborers, a nurse (probably engaged to care for the Davises' nine-month-old daughter), and a servant.²²

Presumably McDonald, who never had his primary domicile at the farm, built the circa 1880s brick house for occasional use as a country home. The Davises moved into the house upon their marriage in 1896, Marvin Davis having become farm manager. They moved to St. Joseph a few years later but returned to the farm periodically.²³ Frame houses occupied by the workers and their families at Walnut Park are no longer standing. A historic photo indicates that the largest of the frame houses was northwest of the present house, just south of the entrance drive. One of the farm laborers and his servant wife lived in a loft, now removed, above the summer kitchen which is attached to the extant dwelling. Early in the 20th century, the Thomas Gore family lived at Walnut Park as tenant farmers in a house south of the show ring. William Stiwall was farm manager after 1907. Stiwall lived in the brick house during the winter but moved to an older frame house (perhaps Wilson's original house) with other farmhands when the Davis family arrived to spend the summer.²⁴

In 1892, two of McDonald's stallions used at stud were Journalist "who represented the very strongest and most direct Hambletonian-Mambrino cross that it was possible to obtain" and Norborne (aka Norcatur) whose lineage included Electioneer, "a marvelous sire of speed," and George Wilkes, one of

²¹ Annette Davis Dabney, "The Life of Rufus Lee McDonald," typewritten manuscript, 1974, p. 3; Logan, op cit., p. 326; St. Joseph News-Press, Jan. 6, 1923.

²² Manuscript Census Schedules, Population, Andrew County, Jefferson Township, Missouri, 1900.

²³ Dabney, op cit., p. 3.

²⁴ Annette Davis Dabney interview, March 3, 1996.

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four of Hambletonian's sons who established sire lines leading to most of today's American trotters and pacers. Journalist, a mahogany bay, was a grandson of Hambletonian 10 and a great-grandson of Mambrino Chief, and Norborne, also reddish brown, was a great grandson of Hambletonian 10 and a great-great grandson of Mambrino Chief.²⁵ From 1888-1898, Journalist sired 23 foals that were listed in Wallace's American Trotting Register under McDonald's name. Norborne was much more prolific, siring 99 registered foals from 1891-1908. Davis eventually became co-owner of Norborne, after which many foals were registered jointly. Another stallion named Massowa, bred to the offspring of both Journalist and Norborne and jointly owned until Davis' death, sired 88 registered foals from 1901-1911. Altogether, 243 foals produced at Walnut Park Farm were listed in the Register from 1888-1914.²⁶ The number of foals sold while they were still colts and fillies, and subsequently registered by their purchasers rather than by McDonald, if registered at all, is unknown. Unlike today, during McDonald's era there were no rules about registering foals in a timely manner.

While McDonald was proud of his stallions, he was equally proud of his dams "on which the greatness of the breeding farm rests." In 1892, the Walnut Park harem numbered between two and three dozen broodmares and was headed by Old Nell (registered as Nell). Old Nell, reputedly McDonald's favorite road horse, sired by Hiatoga in 1866, was "an animal of extraordinary stamina and substance, as well as of great speed, both at the trot and under saddle, at the rack or single-foot." When Old Nell was crippled in 1876, McDonald retired her to a career in breeding. Seven of Old Nell's foals are listed in the Register, including Amy Lee who had the dazzling time of 2:17 1/2. Two years after Journalist was foaled in 1885, he was bred to Old Nell's oldest daughter, Fantine. This pairing continued for a number of years, with Fantine passing her mother's stamina and speed and Journalist passing his powerful trotter's conformation and equable temperament on to their offspring. Of Fantine's 13 foals listed in the Register, six of the pairings were with Journalist.

But despite their many attributes, Journalist and McDonald's other prized stallions were strictly local heroes if breeding fees are used as the basis of comparison. While Journalist was advertised as available for breeding at \$50 per mare in 1892, stallion fees for Arion--a nationally famous speedster who lowered the high-wheel sulky trotting record to 2:07 3/4--were advertised in the same year at an astronomical \$2,500. Owners of some other top stallions (not in Missouri) were asking \$1,000 and up "and their books were full."²⁷ Of course only the very best horses commanded such high stud fees. Probably, McDonald's fees were typical of those charged for high quality horses that were locally or

²⁵"Walnut Park Farm," St. Joseph Daily News, Jan. 1, 1892. While a horse that was available for breeding at Walnut Park was called Norborne in the Daily News, what was apparently the same horse based on the published pedigree is listed as Norcatur in Wallace's American Trotting Register.

²⁶A list of Standardbred foals produced at Walnut Park Farm was compiled by Donna King, coordinator of the Information and Research Department of the United States Trotting Association. See John H. Wallace, Wallace's American Trotting Register (New York: National Association of Trotting Horse Breeders, Volumes VIII-XX [1888-1914]). The information includes name of breeder, name of horse, year of foal, registry number, color and sex of foal, name of sire, name of dam and name of sire of dam.

²⁷Philip A. Pines, The Complete Book of Harness Racing (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1970), p. 122.

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regionally known. While "all [Journalist's] colts may not make race horses, they will be horses when judged by every other test that can be applied," said the ad; certainly a reasonable caveat. In 1892 Journalist was permitted to stand at stud to 20 mares outside the harem.²⁸ As it turned out, 1892 was the zenith year not only for harness racing but for the Standardbred horse in America. The financial panic of 1893 nearly paralyzed racing for the next several years, and later the automobile literally ran the often skittish trotters off the roads.²⁹

From the 1870s when stud books were still in their infancy through the early 1890s, McDonald registered relatively few foals in any given year. From 1889-1895, an average of four or five foals were registered annually. But beginning in 1896--about the time that Marvin Middleton Davis married McDonald's daughter Annette Vance McDonald and became farm manager--production of registered foals at Walnut Park Farm increased to double digits, with Davis listed as a co-owner with McDonald. With Davis as farm manager, the production of registered foals remained significantly higher than during the previous two decades.³⁰ The most productive year was 1905, when 27 foals were sired--18 by the farm's newest stallion Massowa and nine by Norborne. Two years later, however, Davis became ill while on a business trip in Kansas and died shortly afterward.³¹ McDonald himself died in 1923, but the last year of Register listing for a Walnut Park Farm-bred foal was, apparently, 1914.³²

As a breeder, McDonald undoubtedly followed the racing careers of harness horses rather closely. On Sept. 11, 1888, one of McDonald's mares (the speedy Amy Lee) had taken the winner's share of a \$500 purse at the St. Joseph track, winning three of her four heats with a best time of 2:31 1/4. Other Walnut Park-bred trotters raced periodically and apparently won their share of races at St. Joseph and Chillicothe from 1892-1914.³³ But at first McDonald was ambivalent about participating in commercial harness racing. Curiously, as late as January 1892, Walnut Park was promoted as strictly a breeding farm where "young stock are broken and developed to the extent of showing their capacity in speed, strength and stamina; and as an evidence of this capacity and as a means of comparison, records will be given them as opportunity offers. But as regards campaigning or racing, the same practice will obtain at Walnut Park that prevails at Woodburn, Indian Hill or Palo Alto." These were well-known breeding farms of the

²⁸St. Joseph Daily News, January 1, 1892.

²⁹Pines, op cit., pp. 49-50, 272; "Walnut Park Farm," St. Joseph Daily News, January 1, 1892.

³⁰The 1902 St. Joseph City Directory gives Davis' occupation as "Real Estate and Manager of Walnut Park Farm."

³¹Dabney, op cit., p. 7.

³²St. Joseph News-Press, Jan. 6, 1923.

³³The United States Trotting Association, which provided this information, maintains a collection of racing yearbooks containing track statistics but has no yearbooks prior to 1887. There was no racing at St. Joseph or Chillicothe from 1909-11.

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period which McDonald, apparently sensitive to his wife's "strict Presbyterian ideals" of moral behavior--sought to emulate. Obviously, this changed; presumably McDonald either decided that track competition was harmless after all, not to mention being good for business when the horses did well, or he allowed someone else to make this decision.³⁴ Davis probably encouraged greater participation in the sport even before he became a member of the family, and farm manager, in 1896.

By the end of 1892, in any case, trotters bred at Walnut Park Farm and owned by McDonald--including Brazil, Arabella, Arasend, Congo and Amy Lee--had competed and won purses at St. Joseph. In 1895, beginning with Congo and Azie Lee, McDonald's trotters were competing at the Chillicothe track as well, 70 miles away. Other Walnut Park-bred competitors over the years included Iatan, Jantina, Hatteras, Korata Lee, Jalinda, Leotina, Pramus, Oratus, Orox Lee and Zealous Lee. Their sires included Journalist, Norcatur, Massowa and Arabesque (Arabesque apparently was not owned by McDonald). The later group included trotters owned jointly by McDonald and Davis. The winner's circle at these local tracks included other trotters sired by stallions at Walnut Park.³⁵

While McDonald's passion for breeding Standardbred horses at Walnut Park Farm may have declined after the death of his son-in-law if not before, he always had numerous other claims on his time. McDonald, whose wealth for the most part was earned rather than inherited, had been prominently identified with St. Joseph's commercial life since 1851, first as a jobbing merchant and later as a clothing manufacturer. McDonald's agricultural pursuits were probably financed, in large part, by his successful business ventures. In 1882, he purchased a large cattle ranch in Rawlins County, Kansas, and traveled there with business associates on numerous hunting expeditions. McDonald was also a developer of subdivisions and a director of banks. He was involved in civic affairs and is said to have been actively involved in the operation of his factory until the end. He never retired in order to devote more time to his agricultural pursuits, although he certainly could have afforded to do so.³⁶

The focus of this nomination has been on the breeding of fast horses at Walnut Park Farm because, as a breeder, McDonald seems to have enjoyed his greatest recognition in that arena. But he was also a noted breeder of Shorthorn cattle and, in fact, McDonald's obituary mentions his "enviable reputation" at breeding Shorthorns as well as trotters. Shorthorns, a meat breed, were popular with America's earliest settlers. This breed originated in Great Britain and by 1900, nearly a million animals had been registered by the American Shorthorn Association. As early as 1854, Midwestern farmers began importing breeding stock directly from Scotland. The Scottish Shorthorns were compact and blocky in build.

³⁴"Walnut Park Farm," St. Joseph Daily News, Jan. 1, 1892; "R.L.M'Donald Dead at Age of 90 Years," St. Joseph News-Press, Jan. 6, 1923.

³⁵Wallace's Year-Book of Trotting and Pacing, various issues. Collection of United States Trotting Association Information Research Department, Columbus, Ohio.

³⁶Dabney, op.cit., p. 3.

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Easily fattened, they produced quality meat and were capable of adapting to most conditions.³⁷ Apparently McDonald also raised Leicestershire sheep and an undetermined breed of swine, but for several years his primary avocation was clearly the breeding of Standardbred horses, at which he excelled.

Livestock varieties and some of their more significant breeders are discussed in The State of Missouri: An Autobiography, but McDonald's name only appears on the short list of breeders of Standardbred horses.³⁸ Still, an examination of old herd books, exhibit records and other research might show that McDonald's contribution to Shorthorn breeding was as impressive as his efforts in the equine arena. Missouri Shorthorn breeders were certainly more numerous than breeders of Standardbred horses, so it was probably more difficult to stand out from the crowd. But in the 19th century, especially, breeders like McDonald who could afford to experiment deserve much credit for initiating the advances that provided the foundation for today's improved herds.

The sheep depicted in a historic photograph of Walnut Park Farm appear to be the hornless Leicestershire breed. This breed, established by an 18th century English breeder named Bakewell, was known for the quality of its meat. Leicestershire sheep were pure white with long slim heads, short necks, broad chests, plump shoulders and sides, flat backs and broad loins. The meat breeds of sheep required abundant pasture and the loess soil of Walnut Park Farm provided it.³⁹

The L-shaped basement barn, easily the most striking of the extant buildings at Walnut Park Farm, is a reminder of McDonald's breeding interests apart from horses. The ground floor originally provided shelter for the farm's cattle and sheep herds. The barn is immediately visible as one enters the property from U.S. 59/71.

Agricultural production records for Walnut Park Farm are somewhat difficult to assemble. Because McDonald lived in St. Joseph, the enumerator for the agricultural census never listed McDonald as the farm operator. Family records of farm managers or tenants over the years are incomplete. However in 1880, one farm stands out in the agricultural census for Jefferson Township where the farm is located because it has a relatively large number of horses, sheep and cattle and is the only farm with precisely 400 acres, which then was the size of Walnut Park Farm. This farm almost certainly was McDonald's. It was operated by P____ Buchanan, who is listed under the tabular heading "Rents for shares of products." The acreage, all improved, consisted of 240 tilled acres and 160 acres of permanent pastures and meadows. The value of the land and buildings was \$20,000, highest in the township. The value of the livestock, \$2,350, also was highest in the township. There were 18 horses, the most in the township; 154 sheep, more than most other farms; 32 milch cows and 10 other cattle, a total matched by

³⁷Gos DeVoogt, Our Domestic Animals: Their Habits, Intelligence and Usefulness. Ed. by Chas William Burkett (Boston: Ginn and Co., Athenaeum Press, 1907), pp. 216-217.

³⁸Williams, op cit., pp. 119-120.

³⁹DeVoogt, op cit., pp. 174-175.

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only one other farm. The number of swine, 100, also was relatively large for the time and place although other township farms surpassed it. Crop production included 1,400 bushels of corn, 500 bushels of oats, 200 bushels of apples, and 100 tons of hay. The amount of wages and board paid to the farm workers was the highest in the township, at \$1,500.⁴⁰

Pending further research, only local significance is claimed for Walnut Park Farm but it is clearly representative of what must be considered a dwindling resource in Missouri, the purebred livestock breeding farm of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Here selective breeding was practiced to improve the farm's Standardbred horses, Shorthorn cattle and, apparently, Leicestershire sheep. Broodmares and their foals were cared for, trotters were trained for road and track, cows were milked, sheep were shorn, pastures were maintained, crops including corn, wheat and oats were planted and harvested, butter was made, etc. Since no comprehensive survey of Missouri's historic horse breeding facilities has been undertaken, however, comparison of Walnut Park Farm with other surviving examples is not possible at this time. Physically, Longview Farm in Jackson County (listed in the National Register of Historic Places 10/24/85) is a much more complete agricultural facility than Walnut Park Farm but most of its horses were bred and trained for the show ring rather than the race track (horse racing faded quickly in Missouri after bookmaking was prohibited in 1905), and its period of significance is later than at Walnut Park Farm. Although horse stalls were removed from the stable in circa 1950, the exterior of this key building retains integrity from the time when trotters were quartered inside. The track and show ring is only an overgrown site today, but it retains ambiance since no modern properties intrude on the view. Other related properties, notably the bank barn and brick farmhouse with its attached summer kitchen, add interest and diversity to the district. Scattered throughout the acreage, several old water wells for thirsty horses and other stock serve as a unifying feature of sorts.

ADDITIONAL FARM AND FAMILY HISTORY:

Robert Wilson, a native of Virginia, originally owned the acreage that became the nucleus of Walnut Park Farm. Born near Staunton, Wilson moved to Howard County, Missouri, in 1820. Wilson, whose only daughter Mary Ann became R. L. McDonald's wife, was appointed a U.S. Senator during the Civil War. In the early 1850s Wilson, a widower, his children and his brother-in-law and sister-in-law Armstrong and Eliza Beattie, moved west to the Platte Purchase, that portion of Missouri which was added to the original state by treaty between several resident Indian tribes and the United States, in 1836 and 1837. The Beatties became residents of St. Joseph, where he established that city's first banking house. Initially, Wilson lived outside the city near one of its major trade routes, known as "The Road to Robidoux's." Joseph Robidoux, who platted St. Joseph, had established a trading post there in 1809.⁴¹

⁴⁰At the time of the 1870 agricultural census, McDonald owned a portion of the acreage that became Walnut Park Farm and his wife inherited another portion that year, but not enough information was available to locate the farm in the manuscript census. The 1890 census was destroyed by fire. The 1900 population schedule was the only 20th century census schedule consulted.

⁴¹Logan, *op cit.*, pp. 197-199, 234, 330-334.

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In May 1852, Wilson purchased all of the northwest quarter of Section 22, Township 58N, Range 35W except a half-acre cemetery previously deeded to the United Baptist Church at Jamestown, a now-defunct community.⁴² In 1854 Wilson was elected to the Missouri Senate from Andrew County. In 1855--the year that Wilson's daughter became McDonald's wife--Wilson bought most of the nominated acreage, an 80-acre tract consisting of the west half of the northeast quarter of Section 22, T58N, R35W, which along with a slice of farmland east of the U.S. 59/71 right-of-way constitutes the Walnut Park Farm Historic District. On the eve of the Civil War, during Wilson's second term as state senator, he is credited with helping keep Missouri in the Union by persuading "the leading men of northwest Missouri," future delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1861, to oppose secession. In 1862, Wilson was appointed to the U.S. Senate by Governor Hamilton R. Gamble and spent most of the next two years in Washington, D.C. When a successor was elected in 1863, Wilson returned to his farm north of St. Joseph. He died in 1870 at the age of 69.⁴³

There is a local perception that Wilson, rather than McDonald, constructed the large basement barn (as well as the house) on the property.⁴⁴ However, this has not been substantiated. Perhaps because of its relatively large size--approximately 5,500 square feet on the first floor--the barn (or a different one at virtually the same location, which is unlikely) is depicted and labeled as a barn in the 1877 Andrew County Atlas. The barn appears to predate the extant brick house, a circa 1880s building undoubtedly constructed by McDonald. Apparently, Wilson's residence (or an earlier McDonald house) was east and possibly slightly north of the basement barn. Township tax records which would have aided in dating the buildings have not been preserved.

McDonald's country estate grew to 400 acres with the addition of Wilson's 240 acres, which Mrs. McDonald inherited. McDonald, who ultimately became one of St. Joseph's wealthiest citizens, expanded the farm again in 1882 with the purchase of 80 acres (the east half of the northeast quarter of Section 22) from the estate of Armstrong Beattie. Today this acreage lies between the district and I-29. The final addition to the farm (68 acres across the north half of the southeast quarter of Section 22), was added between 1877 and 1896.⁴⁵ When McDonald began calling his farm Walnut Park is unknown. The 1896 Andrew County Atlas identifies the acreage--by then 548 acres--as the Walnut Park Stock Farm (owned by R. L. McDonald), but other historic atlases simply identify the farm by McDonald's name.

McDonald, of Scottish ancestry, was born May 19, 1832, in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. In 1851 he traveled to St. Joseph to visit an uncle, Dr. Silas McDonald. McDonald also hoped to find employment in the

⁴²Andrew County Deed Records Book 4, p. 337.

⁴³Logan, *op cit.*, pp. 333-334.

⁴⁴According to Annette Davis Dabney, McDonald's granddaughter who was born in the brick house in 1899, both buildings were erected by Robert Wilson, her great grandfather, in the 1850s. Mrs. Dabney was interviewed by Sheridan Logan, St. Joseph area historian, on January 27, 1993. Typewritten transcript, p. 1.

⁴⁵Andrew County Deed Records Book 5, p. 781.

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burgeoning city, then a major outfitting center for countless pioneers headed west. With the help of his aunt, Sarah Donnell McDonald, he found a clerical position at the mercantile firm owned by Robert Donnell and Albe Saxton known as the People's Store. After their marriage in 1855, R. L. and Mary Ann McDonald moved into her father's home in St. Joseph, called The Pines. In 1856 when Donnell and Saxton decided to open the St. Joseph Branch of the Bank of Missouri, they sold their share of the mercantile firm to McDonald, who by this time had become a partner. McDonald was allowed to make time payments on the store, which he enlarged, out of his future profits.⁴⁶

As a pioneer St. Joseph businessman in 1864, McDonald assembled and dispatched to California a wagon train of supplies and around a hundred young mules bought on-the-cheap. McDonald's brother-in-law James Wilson was in charge of the wagon train, which McDonald joined in Salt Lake City after traveling there by stagecoach. McDonald accompanied the procession to San Francisco where the mules, now fully grown, were sold to the U.S. government at a large profit. With the proceeds, McDonald traveled via the Panama Canal to New York City where he purchased vast quantities of new merchandise for his store. The entire episode was "highly successful...though one fraught [mainly the trek to California] with much danger." By 1865 or 1866 McDonald had become primarily a wholesale jobber, in association with C. H. Buckman and F. L. McLain, shipping to the western settlements a variety of products ranging from groceries and drugs to hats and hardware.⁴⁷

In 1880, McDonald had the Italianate business block built at Fourth and Francis in St. Joseph. This extant building, called R. L. McDonald & Co., is a linchpin of the National Register-listed Wholesale Row District (9/19/77). At the time of construction, it was the largest mercantile house in St. Joseph. In 1886, McDonald purchased the former Patee House Hotel (John Patee House, listed in the National Register 10/15/66 and a National Historic Landmark) and converted it into a factory for manufacturing work clothing. In 1897, McDonald added a large facility across the street from his factory to provide more office and warehouse space. By 1899, McDonald had ceased all wholesale activity, renting the building at Fourth and Francis to Hundley-Frazer Wholesale Dry Goods. Factories were established in neighboring towns as well as St. Joseph. McDonald remained active in his clothing manufacturing firm until his death in 1923. He was also a developer of several subdivisions at the eastern edge of St. Joseph, a director of three banks, and an officer of the First Presbyterian Church.⁴⁸ In 1893, Governor David R. Francis named McDonald as one of Missouri's two alternates to the Columbian

⁴⁶Logan, op cit., p. 324.

⁴⁷Walter Williams, Ed. A History of Northwest Missouri (Chicago-New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915), pp. 1708-1710; Dabney, op cit., p. 2; St. Joseph News-Press, Jan. 6, 1923; Logan, op cit., pp. 325-326.

⁴⁸St. Joseph News-Press, January 6, 1923, and St. Joseph Gazette, January 7, 1923.

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Exposition in Chicago⁴⁹. The town of McDonald in Rawlins County, Kansas, is said to have been named after him; McDonald purchased a large cattle ranch there in 1882.⁵⁰

McDonald's wholesale and manufacturing activities occupied much of his time but periodically, sometimes several times a week, according to family lore, McDonald would leave his city office and the pressures of the business world and travel to the farm to check operations with the farm manager. Annette Davis Dabney recalled riding to the farm in a buggy with McDonald, her grandfather, and holding on her lap the bag of gold coins from which the farm workers were paid.⁵¹

The St. Joseph News-Press commented on the conflict between McDonald's love of fast horses and his wife's concerns about the gambling connection in his obituary on January 6, 1923. "While he was a breeder, he was not a turfman and was not active on the race course. Mrs. McDonald, with strict Presbyterian ideas, doubted the wisdom of her husband raising fast horses and whispered this to Dr. Silas McDonald, his uncle, then eighty-seven years. The uncle said he would speak to his nephew about it at the dinner table. Mr. McDonald himself was then past seventy. "Rufus," began Doctor McDonald, "I understand you have some fast horses on your farm." "I surely have," answered the nephew McDonald with enthusiasm, "and I'm going to try them out tomorrow. Don't you want to go along?" Uncle Silas himself was fond of a good horse. "I'd just be delighted to go," the aged physician replied, and instead of the admonition it was arranged that he should visit the farm for the tryout the next day." (Nonetheless, a time came when horses owned by McDonald and his son-in-law eventually competed at local race tracks and won purses.)

Because they tended to be close to population centers, farms owned by gentleman farmers usually became casualties when cities expanded. McDonald himself began selling off portions of Walnut Park Farm in 1910, beginning with right-of-way for the St. Joseph & Savannah Interurban Railway Co., Inc. Among other things McDonald was a land speculator and developer, and portions of his agricultural lands were as likely to be sold off as anything else once his enthusiasm flagged. The railroad track sliced through the farm just west of the district boundary, providing rapid transit between the county seats of Buchanan and Andrew Counties.⁵² Additional development then became feasible, and in 1911 McDonald sold a tract of 120.09 acres in Sections 21 and 22 to the St. Joseph Country Club, Inc.⁵³

⁴⁹Frank A. Cassell, "Missouri and the Columbian Exposition of 1893" (Missouri Historical Review, Volume LXXX Number 4, July 1986), p. 370.

⁵⁰St. Joseph News-Press, January 6, 1923, and St. Joseph Gazette, January 7, 1923.

⁵¹Dabney, op cit., p. 3.

⁵²Andrew County Deed Records Book 110, p. 526.

⁵³Andrew County Deed Records Book 116, p. 48.

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Relocating from its former location in the city, the country club built a golf course and clubhouse and began constructing an exclusive residential subdivision west of the farmstead.

Apparently, none of McDonald's children had a vital interest in the farm after his death. In 1925, the R. L. McDonald Estate, Inc., sold right-of-way for St. Joseph Road #2 alongside and to the east of the Interurban right-of-way.⁵⁴ In 1927, Country Club Place, Inc., purchased the remaining acreage--tracts of 163.264 and 54.98 acres in Section 22--for additional residential development but the Great Depression caused this project to be aborted.⁵⁵ Another development project was reportedly foiled by drought in the early 1930s.⁵⁶ In 1941, a strip of right-of-way was sold to the Missouri Highway Department for widening U.S. 71 (the federal designation for St. Joseph Road #2).⁵⁷

In 1945, suburban sprawl into the remaining acreage was put on hold when Country Club Place, Inc., sold the property to M. Davis Whimple, a cousin of Marvin Davis. Whimple, who raised swine and cattle, sold the property to the present owner, Allen Schreiber, in 1958. Today, cattle still graze in the fields and are sheltered in the large barn. Schreiber, who lives in nearby St. Joseph as did McDonald, operates the facility as a rental cattle farm; the brick house is also rented. Everything seems peaceful in the oasis between the highways but the acreage that was the heart of Walnut Park Farm remains attractive to those who would subdivide its rolling hills in the name of progress. The present owner hopes that National Register status will help assure its preservation by fostering a greater appreciation of the farm's early history as a breeding facility for quality livestock in Missouri.

McDonald and his agricultural workers raised a variety of fine livestock at Walnut Park Farm, putting into practice and confirming the principles of the developing science of animal husbandry. Based on the dearth of National Register listings, examples of purebred breeding farms from the 19th and early 20th centuries appear to be scarce in Missouri. Although the farm was especially noted for Standardbred horses bred for road and track, the presence of a large bank barn along with the former horse stable assures that it is also evocative of its broader-based breeding program. While the contributing properties and the site retain integrity individually, they also "work" as a district because of their proximity within an agricultural setting, their obviously complementary roles within the farm complex, and in the case of the contributing outbuildings, certain similarities of construction.

⁵⁴Andrew County Deed Records Book 149, p. 179.

⁵⁵Andrew County Deed Records Book 157, p. 217.

⁵⁶Andrew County Deed Records Book 168, pp. 79-82.

⁵⁷Andrew County Deed Records Book 186, p. 145.

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Walnut Park Farm Historic District
Andrew County, MO

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Also:

Deed Records, Andrew County, Missouri.

Deed Records, Buchanan County, Missouri.

1880 Manuscript Census, Agriculture, Andrew County, Missouri.

1900 Manuscript Census, Population, Andrew County, Missouri.

Interview with Annette Davis Dabney, granddaughter of R. L. McDonald, at Heartland Center, St. Joseph,
March 3, 1996. (Hand-written notes by Nancy Sandehn, interviewer.)

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Walnut Park Farm Historic District
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UTM References (continued)

E. Zone 15 Easting 344660 Northing 4410560

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the Walnut Park Farm Historic District is delineated by a polygon, the vertices of which are marked by the following UTM reference points: Beginning at point A 15 344700 4410910, at the intersection of the south section line of section 15, T58N, R23E with the east right-of-way of U.S. Highway 59; then proceed east along the south section line of section 15 to B 15 345110 4410900; then proceed south to C 15 345070 4410090; then proceed west to the east right-of-way of Highway 59, point D 15 344700 4410090; then proceed north along the east right-of-way of Highway 59, through point E 15 344660 4410560 to the point of beginning. The boundary includes the W½ of the NE¼ of section 22, T58N, R23E, and that portion of the NW¼ of section 22 (seven acres) east of Highway 59.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property includes the eight-seven acres which constitute the heart of the multi-dimensional farming operation formerly owned by Rufus L. McDonald and known as Walnut Park Farm. The property remains agricultural in use and feeling and contains the farm's only extant properties. The acreage is sufficient to be evocative of the original farm despite its location between major highways. The remaining portion of the original farm no longer retains integrity due to highway construction or residential development.

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Walnut Park Farm Historic District
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Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Walnut Park Farm Historic District

Andrew County, Missouri

Roger Maserang, #1-24; Nancy Sandehn, #25; Unknown, #26-28

July 1999 #1-24; May 1995 #25; circa 1910 #26-27; circa 1965 #28

Missouri Cultural Resources Inventory, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City

List of Photographs

1. Driveway entrance to historic district, facing east from U.S. 59/71.
2. District view facing northwest, with former horse stable at right.
3. North and west facades of bank barn, facing southeast.
4. South facade of house with original main entrance, facing north.
5. South and east facades of house, facing northwest.
6. West facade of house, facing east.
7. North facades of house and root cellar, facing south.
8. East facade of house, facing west.
9. Entrance to root cellar, facing east.
10. House, garage, bank barn and privy, facing north.
11. View of grazing land with terracing, facing east from rear of barn.
12. East facade of bank barn, facing west.
13. North facade of bank barn, facing south.
14. South portion of barn basement, facing north.
15. North portion of barn basement, facing north.
16. Main floor of barn, facing south.
17. Upper floor of barn, facing east.
18. South facade of garage, west facade of barn, facing north.

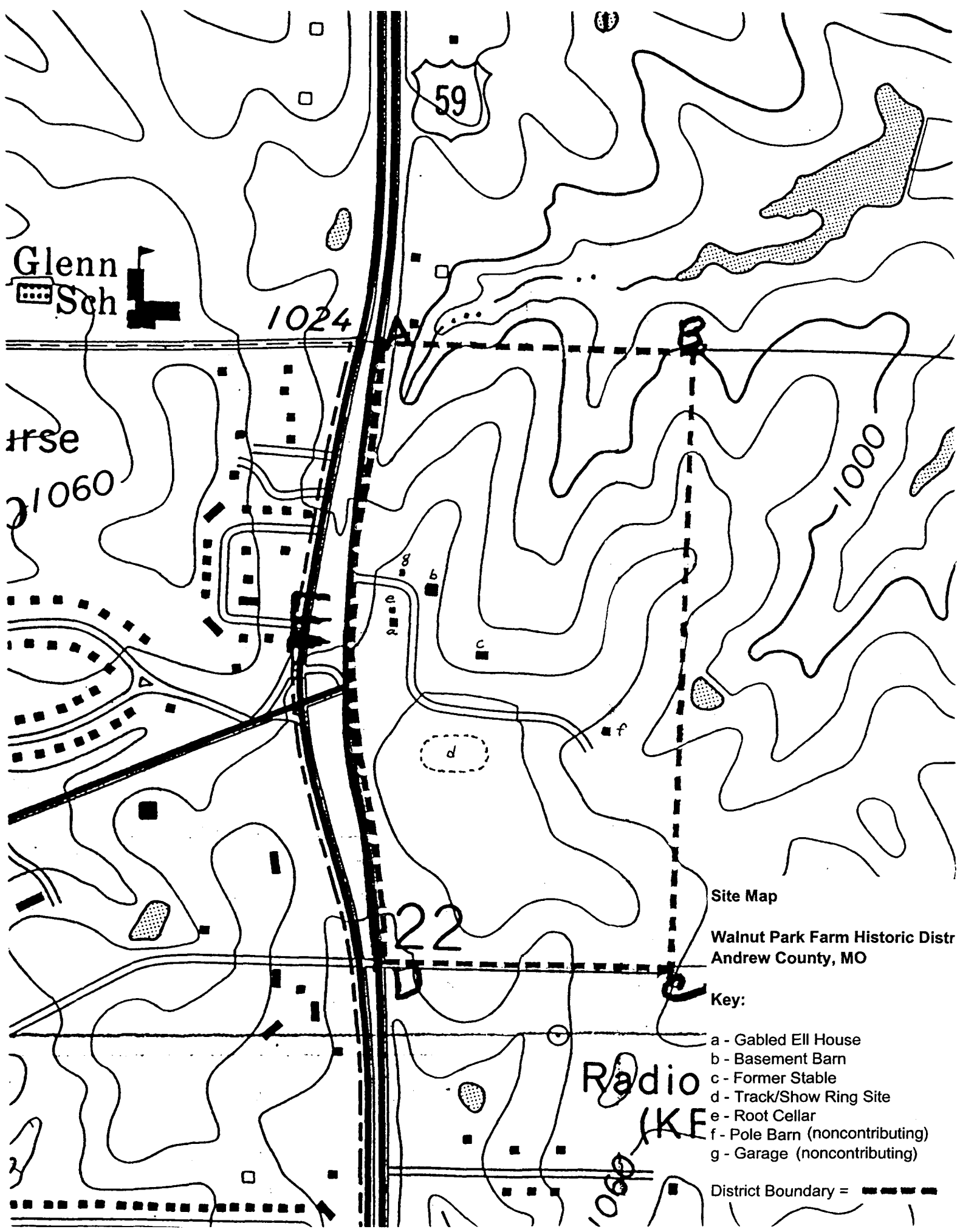
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19. Privy and former horse stable, facing southeast.
20. West and south facades of former horse stable, facing northeast.
21. Capped wells and former horse stable, facing southeast.
22. Interior of former horse stable, facing north.
23. South and east facades of pole barn, facing northwest.
24. Probable site of training track and show ring, facing east.
25. South facade of mule barn (not extant), facing north.
26. Historic view (circa 1910) with horse, facing northeast.
27. Historic view (circa 1910) with sheep, facing east.
28. Aerial view of farm nucleus (circa 1965), facing east.



Site Map

Walnut Park Farm Historic Distr
Andrew County, MO

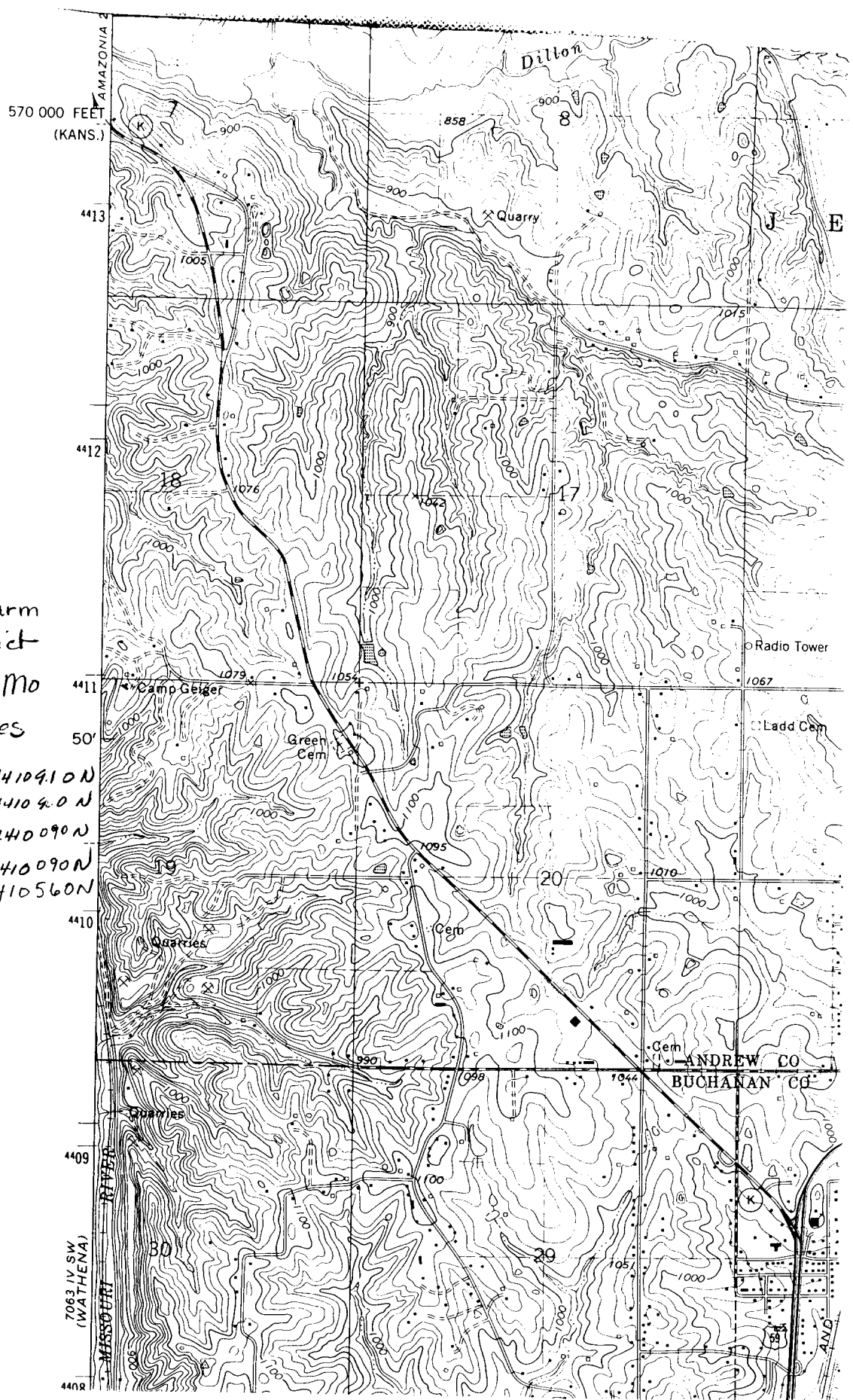
Key:

- a - Gabled Ell House
- b - Basement Barn
- c - Former Stable
- d - Track/Show Ring Site
- e - Root Cellar
- f - Pole Barn (noncontributing)
- g - Garage (noncontributing)

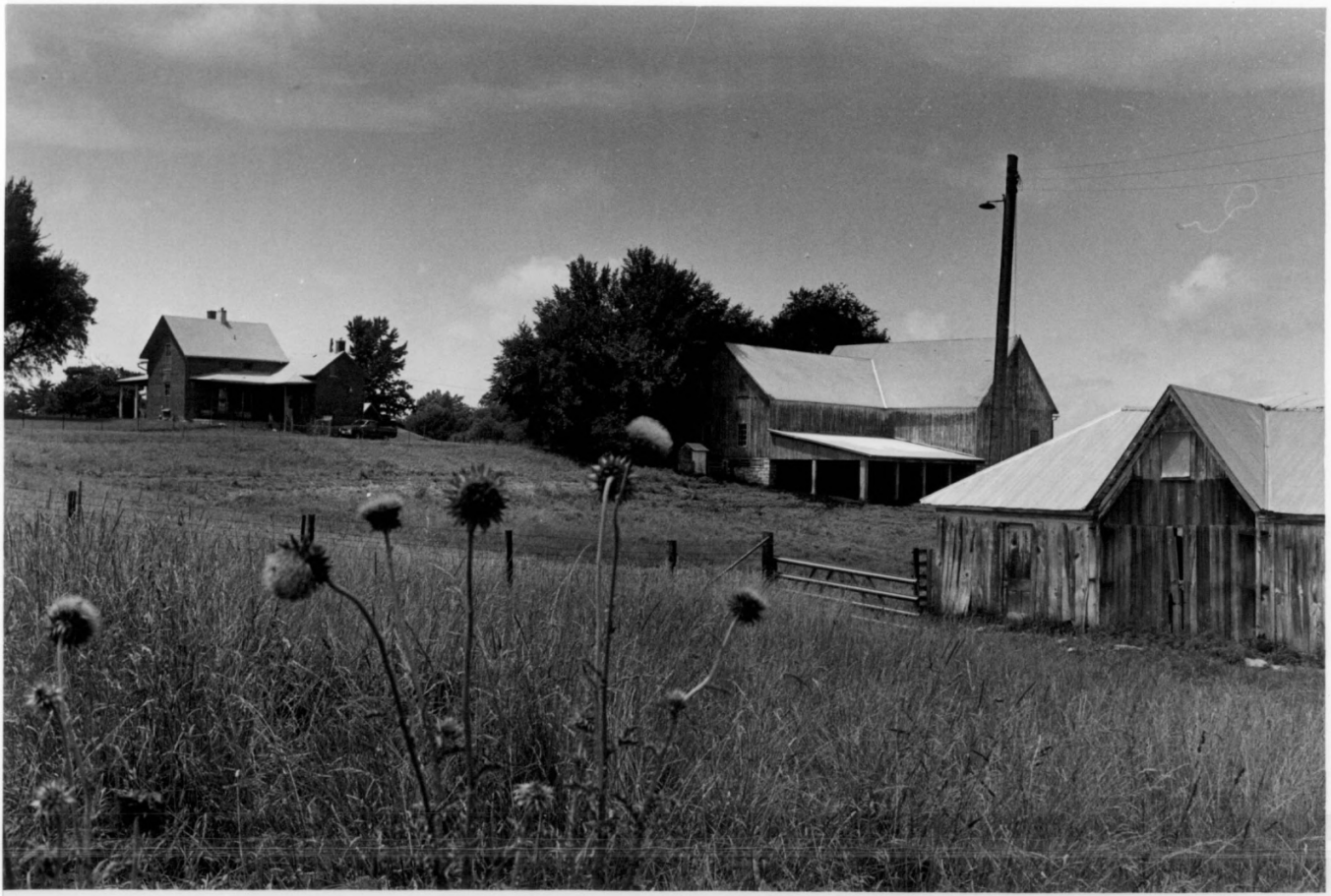
District Boundary = - - - - -

Walnut Park Farm
 Historic District
 Andrew County, MO
 UTM references

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 B 15 345 110E 4410 900N
 C 15 345 070E 4410 090N
 D 15 344 700E 4410 090N
 E 15 344 660E 4410 560N





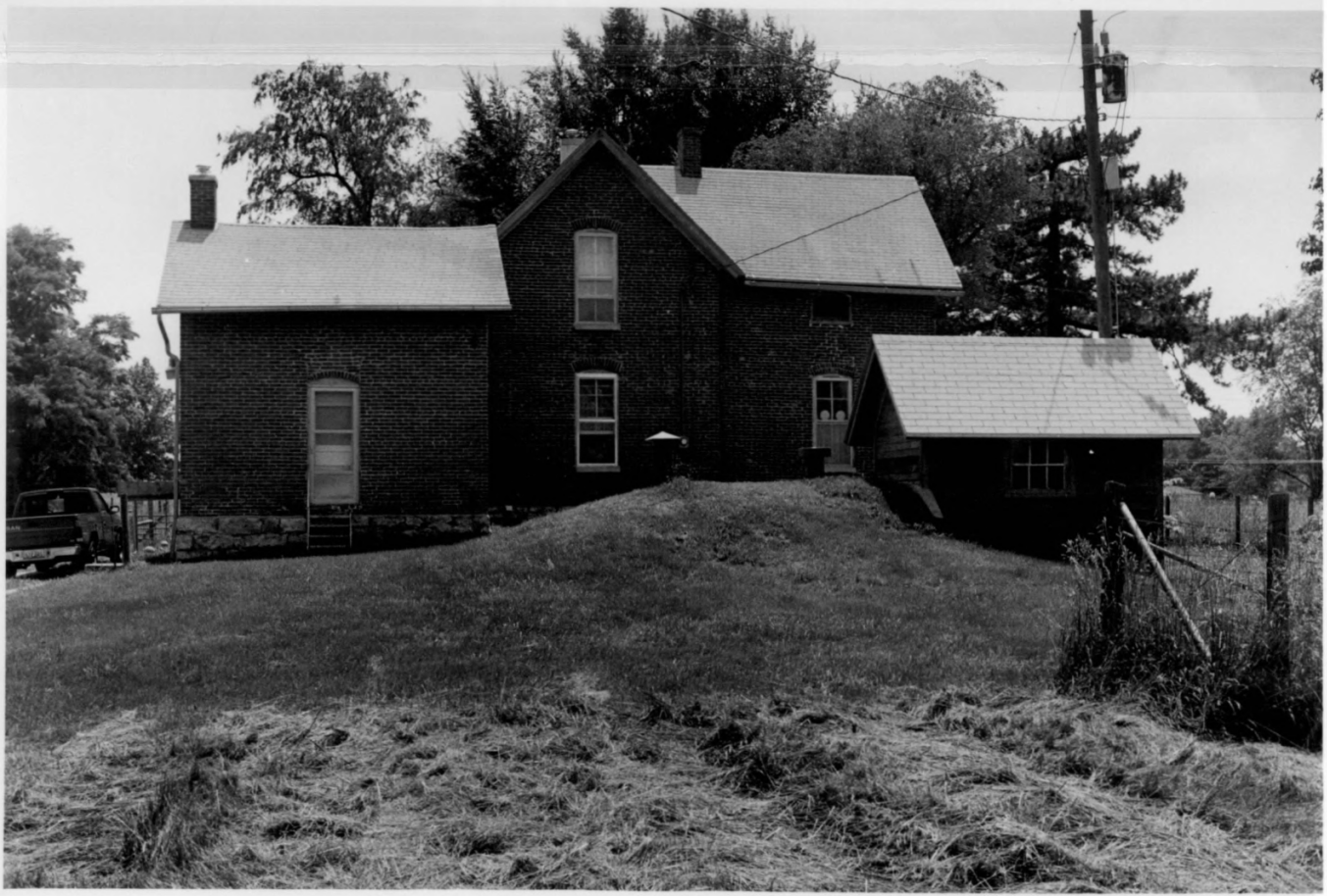










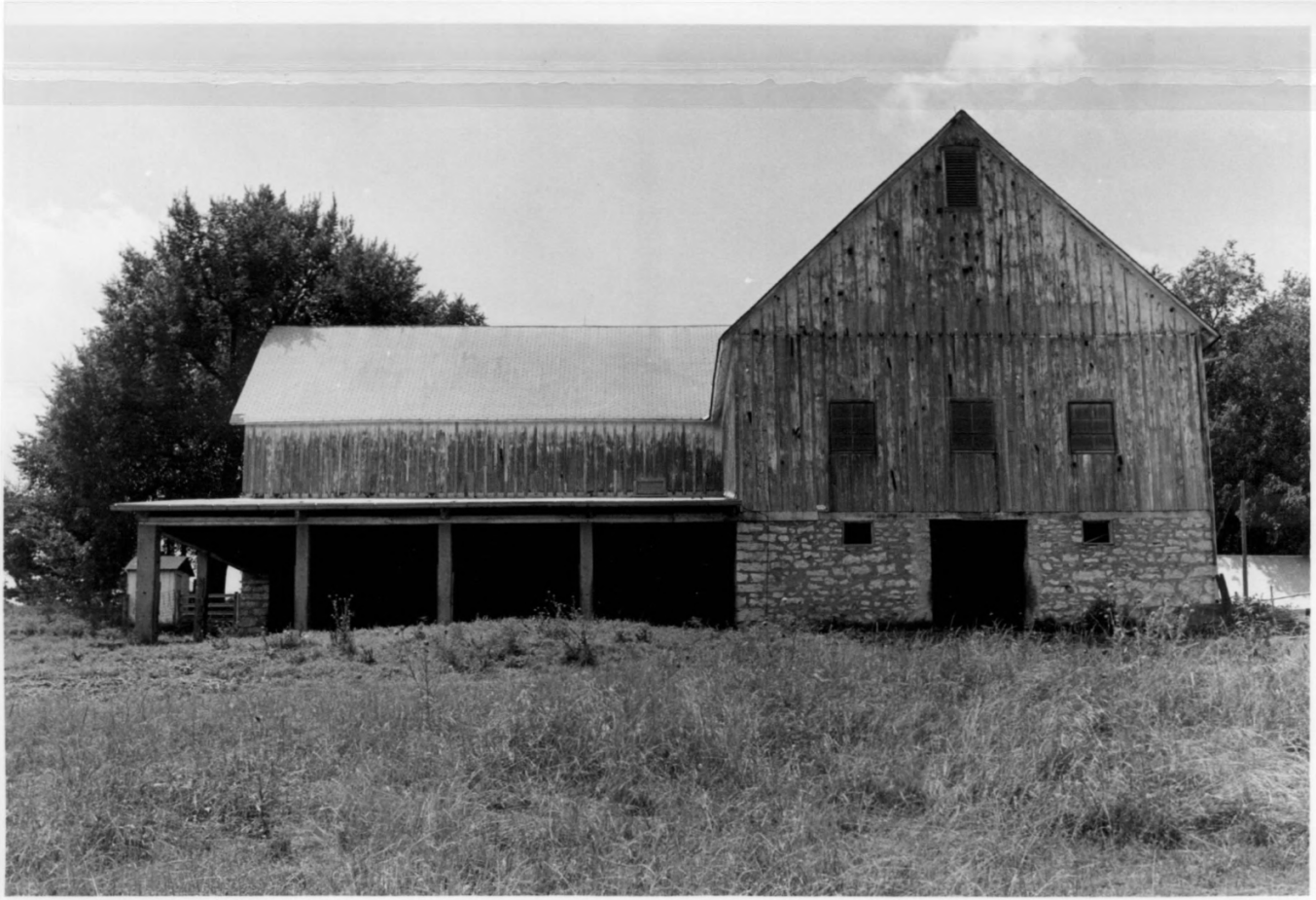








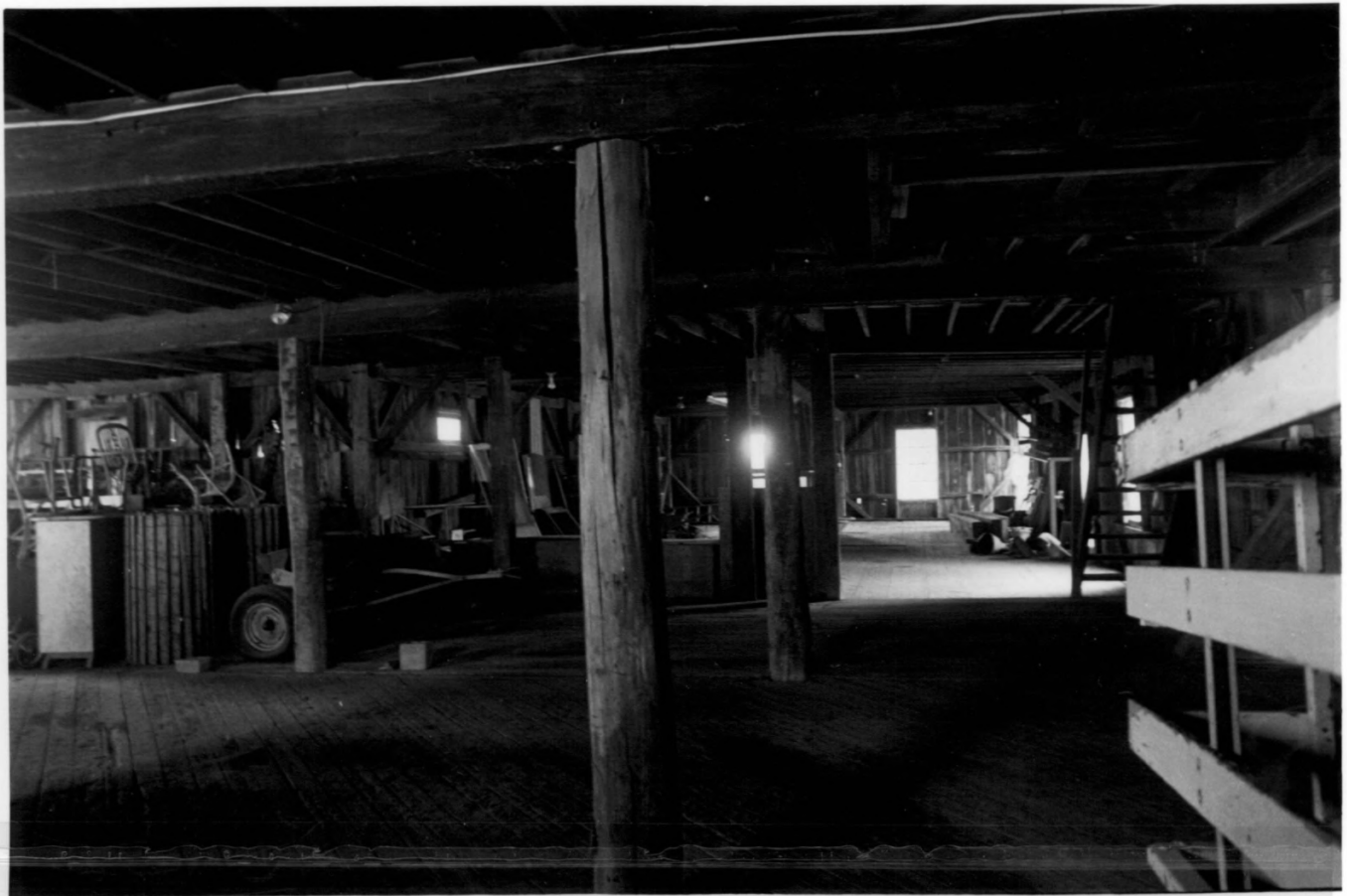








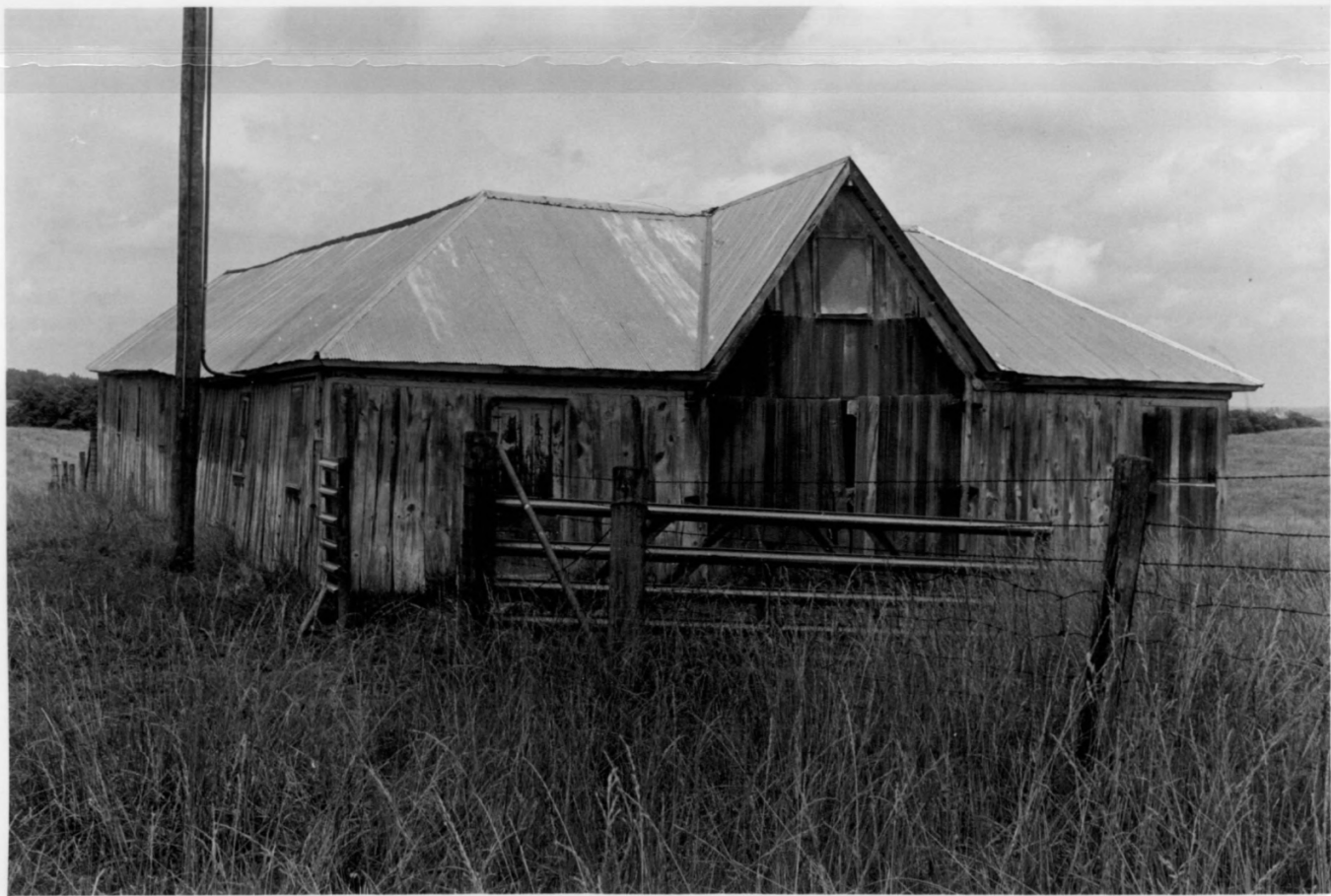






















Stables
at McDonald's
ranch - now the
Country Club

























Annals Hairs Babney's
21010 Old Farm



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Stables
at McDonalds
farm - now the
Country Club



















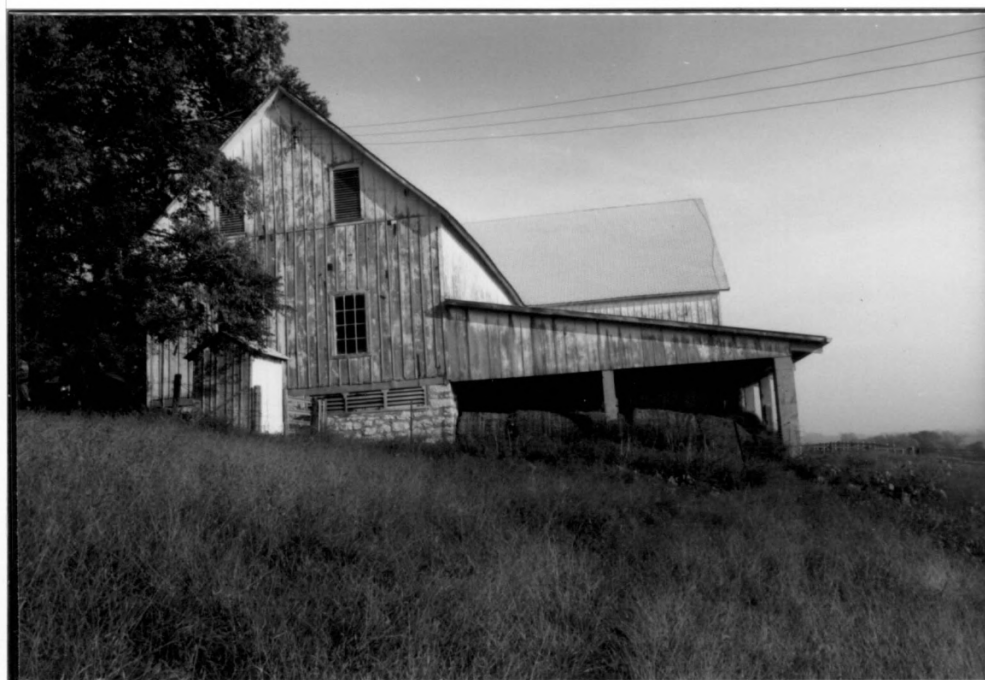


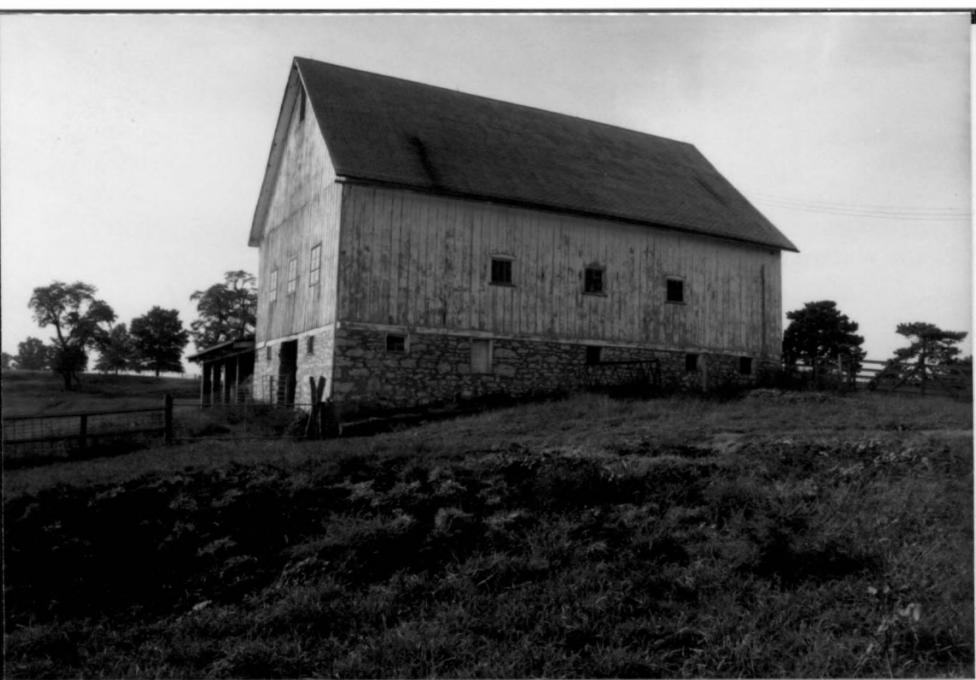














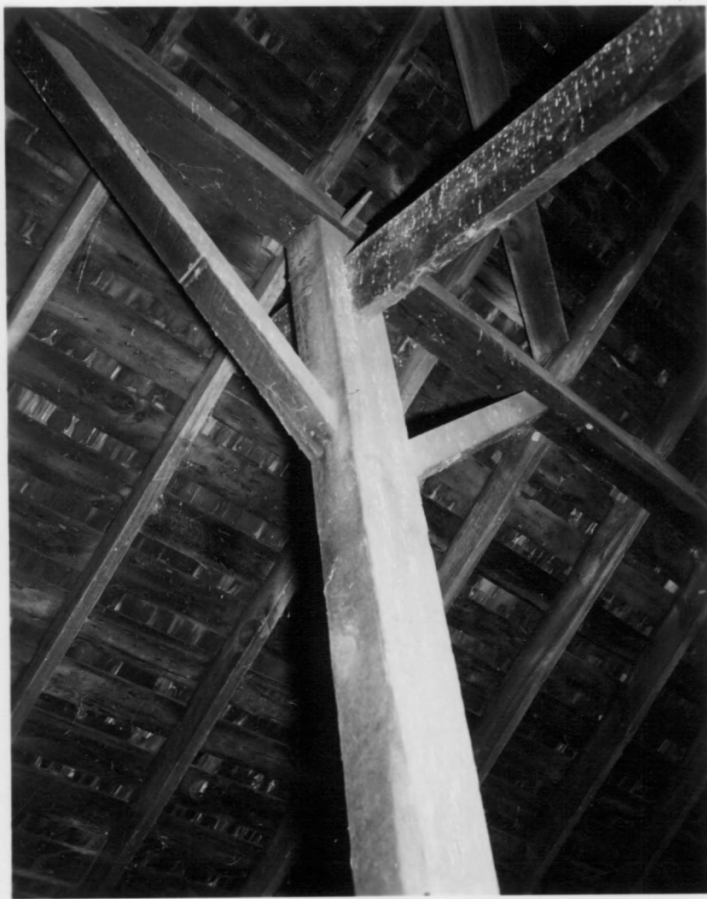












Fig. 1. The interior of the old house, showing the wooden structure and the dark opening.

